

SELIM



MRS. SADLER'S TRANSLATIONS.

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SELIM ;

OR,

THE PACHA OF SALONICA

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH,

By MRS. J. SADLIER.



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At the period of the insurrection of the Greeks against the Turks, there was in the mountains of Livadia a monastery formerly dedicated to St. George, deserted for many ages, doubtless because of the troubles which had, more than once, desolated that country. Surrounded by forests and precipices, and difficult of access, it overlooked a vast extent of land and sea, and it was surprising that no party, whether Greeks or Turks, had taken possession of it as a fortress or a place of refuge to command the adjacent country. But it was known on both sides that several French and Italian religious, joined by some Greek Catholic monks, had retired thither since the beginning of the war, bringing aid to the inhabitants of the neighborhood, assisting the wounded, of whatever nation they might be, when a fight had taken place in the vicinity; in fine, extending their charity

wherever they could exercise it, and studying everywhere to maintain the rights of humanity, so often and so terribly violated in that cruel war.

On a fine day in autumn a numerous troop was advancing, at a slow pace, through the mountain passes of Livadia. By the richness of their costume, the turbans they wore, and their fierce and haughty features, they were easily recognized for the janissaries of the imperial guard; they might be about three hundred, and the chief who commanded them appeared to control them more by the harshness and inflexibility of his demeanor than by the authority vested in him. His vest and caftan were adorned with the richest embroidery, and his turban, as well as his girdle, were formed of the finest shawls of Persia. His naked scimitar hung from his girdle; although stained with blood, it was evidently of the finest Damascus steel, and its handle was covered with the most precious stones. He was mounted on a black horse, fleet and fiery, yet he managed him with ease and dexterity, as he rode in the centre of his troop, surrounded by some officers.

Leaning on the pummel of his saddle, he appeared buried in the deepest reflection, and seemed wholly regardless of the savage wildness of the scenes around him. After they had journeyed for about an hour without a word being spoken, as though fearing to break the silence, an officer who had been for some moments looking anxiously around, bent down and whispered some words to his superior. The Pacha

started, and, raising his head quickly, fixed a piercing and significant look on a man who rode in front, and appeared to act as guide to the troop.

Two janissaries, understanding this look, went immediately and brought the guide to the Pacha.

"Know you who I am?" said he to the guide, in a hard, cold voice, regarding him with his sternest aspect.

"I do," answered the poor man hesitatingly.

"Yet you think to betray me!"

"Believe it not, my lord!" replied the guide, throwing himself on his knees; "as true as St. Michael is my patron, I am conducting your highness where you wanted to go. I have put you on the straight road to St. George——"

"You dared to swear to me that the route was safe, and that the chief of the Falciares, Amiranti, was alone at the monastery."

"And I told your highness the truth; Amiranti was brought there wounded after the last fight, and as to the route, it is safe and unobstructed; the Greeks have too much respect for the monks to venture thither in arms; the Turks even——"

"Be silent, it is enough," said the Pacha with a menacing air; "and I swear by the beard of the prophet, that if you lie, your head shall fall off at a single blow of my scimitar."

On a sign from the Pacha, the guide placed himself again at the head of the troop, which continued its march; the only road to be seen was a narrow

pathway, running along the edge of a steep precipice and overhung by a line of rocks, crowned with black firs, the shade of which added to the gloomy horror of the road ; the sun being already hidden behind the forest, so that objects could no longer be seen at any distance. After an hour's dangerous and toilsome march the precipice at length disappeared, the forest began to grow thinner, and the rocks no longer presented an impenetrable barrier.

The troop hastened on, and reached a large tableland, surrounded on three sides by a still thicker forest, but presenting on the other an immense opening before which the Pacha stopped in admiration ; at his feet stretched immense woods, more fertile and more beautiful as they descended towards the plain ; then fruitful valleys watered by fine rivers, fields covered with olives, mulberry trees, oranges, citrons, a thousand varied shrubs, a verdure shaded to infinitude by the rays of the sun, then setting in the gulf of Lepanto. In the distance, towns and castles offered to the rays of the resplendent day-star the gilt cupolas of their palaces, and the graceful minarets of their mosques. It was a magnificent spectacle.

The entire troop had stopped with its chief to gaze on that delightful prospect ; at a sign from his hand it resumed its march ; the guide preceded them to the very heart of the forest, whence they soon had to ascend anew, and climb a path no less narrow, and, perhaps, still more steep than that they had just left. The janissaries, who went first, cut off with

their scimitars the branches which obstructed the way, thus opening as wide a passage for the Pacha as they could at the moment.

Whilst they thus advanced through the woods, the sun set ; night spread its shades over the forest which soon presented only a dark labyrinth in which the guide alone seemed able to command. The moon rose, and her splendor piercing the foliage showed, at length, after a march of several hours, the Monastery of St. George, the half ruinous walls of which were traced in still darker shadow on the dense mass of the forest. The road widened ; the forest opened in a semi-circle, and showed the entrance of the monastery flanked by an ancient keep, the doors of which were wanting from time immemorial. The moon, shedding a whitish light on these ruins, lent them a still more sombre aspect ; no sign of life was to be seen, and the place seemed utterly deserted.

A dilapidated bridge, placed over a sort of precipice without water, conducted to the arched portal ; the Pacha alighted from his horse and gave him to a soldier to keep ; the other officers did the same, and all together, with the janissaries, penetrated into a vast courtyard surrounded with ruins, where the grass grew thick amongst thorns and briars. A church was seen at the farther end, its windows deprived of glass as far as they could be seen by the light of the moon. The Pacha, at sight of such desolation, and especially in the middle of

the night, involuntarily felt himself frozen with a secret feeling of terror. No one appeared, and it seemed to him impossible that men could have made up their minds to live in such a place. Again he thought himself betrayed ; he darted on the guide a glance no less threatening than in the middle of the forest, laying his hand on his scimitar ; but at the moment a light appeared at the end of a corridor, under a half fallen arcade.

Drawing his ranks close together for fear of a surprise, he ordered the guide to walk between two soldiers, and conduct the troop to the inhabited part of the monastery. They advanced in silence for some moments ; but the noise of their steps, light as it was, had been heard ; a door opened at the farther end ; a monk robed in black appeared in the aperture, bearing a resin torch in his hand, looking with curiosity not unmixed with interest, as if he had nothing to fear from the presence of any foe.

The Pacha gave orders to seize him ; the soldiers rushed into the hall that opened behind the monk, but the latter had extinguished his torch and disappeared, leaving the whole troop in utter darkness. "By the beard of Mahomet," cried the Pacha in a thundering voice, "Satan is busy with us here ; never was Selim Pacha so duped. Where is the guide ?"

The poor man was in the hands of the soldiers who guarded him ; Selim Pacha, foaming with rage, was vociferating the fiercest threats, swearing to destroy all the Christian refugees in the monastery

when a door opened not far from where he stood, and an old man appeared, accompanied by two other religious bearing torches. It was Father Marie Ange, whom his brethren had elected prior of the monastery, on account of his many eminent virtues. Apprised by the first monk that a troop of Mussulmans had invaded their retreat rather as enemies than as men who came to seek aid, his first thought had been for the brave Amiranti, one of the chiefs of the insurgent Greeks, wounded the day before in a combat against the Turks, for whose head a reward was offered by the infidels.

In conveying him to the Monastery of St. George, it was thought that he was placed in an inviolable asylum, awaiting his cure, as the Turks themselves had always had for the monks who dwelt there the respect and veneration wherewith their virtues and their charitable devotion inspired all parties.

But Selim Pacha, arrived in Livadia only a few days before, was a stranger to the softer feelings of the heart; proud, cruel, and of a gloomy, savage disposition, he affected a profound contempt for the ties of gratitude and humanity; moreover, knowing little of the fame of the good religious whom he had not had time as yet to appreciate, he had smiled ferociously at the thought of brutally carrying Amiranti away from them, a Greek deserter, now acting as guide, having revealed the place of his retreat. The desire of gratifying his avarice, by gaining the reward offered for the head of that valorous chief, excited

him no less than his cruelty, and we have already seen the impatience with which he was having himself conducted to St. George to accomplish his design.

On learning the arrival of a troop of janissaries, the friar suspected that the cruel Selim, whose ferocity was well known, must have accompanied them, and that, notwithstanding the usual inviolability of his monastery, he who respected nothing could only have come there to tear Amiranti away. He, therefore, gave immediate orders to have the Palicare removed to an impenetrable part of the monastery, known only to the religious, and he resolved to devote himself to save him to whom he had granted that asylum, exposing his own head to the fury of the Pacha.

Father Marie Ange was formed to impress all who saw him. His face, worn with years and sufferings, by privations of every kind, by labors, and, perchance, by grief, had an expression of admirable resignation and celestial meekness. The lustre of his eyes, sunk as they were, revealed the sighs which his soul exhaled towards heaven, that he might be united to his Divine Master, whose virtue, whose charity, and whose sufferings he retraced on earth. His white hairs, his long black robe, over which hung a white scapular, the torches that lit his arrival, added still more to the humble majesty of his mien, and struck all the janissaries with respect; the ferocious Pacha felt himself moved by the sight of that venerable man, and the order of arresting him with his two companions expired on his lips.

For the first time, doubtless, in many years, it cost him an effort to speak with his habitual harshness. "Who are you," said he in a menacing tone, "who dare to screen rebellious subjects and give aid and comfort to men proscribed by his high mightiness the magnanimous Sultan Mahmoud, the vicar of the Prophet?"

"I am a poor servant of the Almighty God," answered the religious, in a voice full of sweetness which stirred the depths of the Pacha's heart, "and the succor I and my brethren give is given to all who need it, without any distinction. The God we serve makes no exception of persons."

"Do you dare to speak so audaciously to me?" said the Pacha, whose fury could not bear the mildness and humility of these words; "know you not that I can have you put to death on the instant?"

"My soul is in the hands of God," replied the monk with celestial calmness, "and of my life I have long made the sacrifice."

"You must tell me where is Amiranti on whose head a price is set. Think not to deceive me. . . . By the Prophet's camel, I am more cunning than you."

"I have never deceived any one."

"Then give up Amiranti, the Greek rebel whom you received here after the engagement in which he was wounded."

"Selim Pacha, I am a Frenchman and a servant of Jesus Christ; after that, think if I can be a traitor and a renegade!"

These words, spoken in a sweet but penetrating voice, appeared to strike the Pacha profoundly; a secret voice in the depths of his heart repeated the last words of the monk, which his lips murmured with a strange feeling of terror, of anguish, of resentment against the holy man: "Traitor! renegade!" he repeated in an under tone, but he could not conceal what he felt in his heart from Father Marie Ange, who appeared to penetrate its deepest recesses.

"Traitor! renegade!" he at length cried aloud,— "you insult me, unhappy man," he added, striking his scimitar with a loud crash against the flags; "but let him be arrested, and kept away from the others in this room, and woe to those who allow him to escape!"

Saying these words he entered the room, whilst two janissaries, taking the torches from the hands of the other monks, lit up the hall.

"The will of God be done!" answered Father Marie Ange, "placing himself between the two soldiers. "For you, my brethren," added he, addressing the two other religious, "show these men where they may rest in peace and serve them with whatever they require."

Several janissaries remained with the venerable prior, whilst Selim had himself conducted to the refectory with the rest of his people, to whom the brethren there assembled served up, as the prior had ordered, bread, wine, fruits, meats and water. After their ablutions, according to the law of the Koran, the Turks sat down to table and eat like famished

people, wondering much the while at the charity and zeal wherewith they saw themselves served by the good religious. After their supper, they dismissed the monks, who went quietly away. Selim commanded an officer to go and sleep near the janissaries who were guarding the prior. Having then placed two sentinels at each of the doors leading to the refectory, he wrapped himself in his cloak to sleep; the others followed his example, and all were soon asleep, fatigued as they were after the toilsome march they had made.

In the dead of the night Selim awoke; his mind disturbed with strange thoughts, and secret terrors which he could not define. "For more than twenty years," thought he, "have I abandoned, to satisfy my unruly passions, both my country and the religion of my fathers; is it possible that I am still sensible of remorse; after having committed so many crimes, having amassed immense wealth by means which my country's prejudices deem so odious, without experiencing the least regret, can the presence and the words of a single man restrain me in the midst of my career?—I could not dare to punish him for giving shelter to that rebel Amiranti!—To-morrow, to-morrow, I will be stronger.—I will drive away all these chimeras. . . . He shall then give me up Amiranti, or die with all his monks——"

Making these reflections, the renegade tried to sleep; but his imagination represented to him a thousand thoughts more strange, a thousand phantoms

more terrible, one than the other; a burning heat, like that of fever, devoured his bowels and his palate; his agitation gave him neither peace, nor rest, nor truce.

He was in this state of feverish excitement when a sound, like that of a distant bell, struck his ear; he sat up listening with attention; the sound continued. He arose, opened the door, and went out of the refectory; the noise of his steps alone sounding on the broken flags of the old cloisters of the monastery, reached his heart like a warning for which he could nohow account. Guided by the mild light of the moon falling through the ruined arches of St. George, he came to a rather low porch closed by two worm-eaten shutters, through the numerous chinks of which faint rays of light escaped.

Urged by curiosity, he opens one of the shutters and goes in; he finds himself in one of the low aisles of the church which he had perceived on entering the monastery. It was partly covered with ruins, and the choir alone preserved some remains of its ancient splendor. The sky and its twinkling stars were seen above the roofless colonnades; but the inclosure around the altar was still covered with its arch, under which the monks came to sing, at stated hours, the praises of the Lord. Several tapers were burning on the altar in wooden candlesticks; doubtless the midnight office was about to commence, for the bell was still ringing, calling the monks to assemble.

The renegade felt himself drawn to stay some moments longer; the memories of a youth far less guilty, of

childhood's happy days, the paternal house, a beloved family, appeared to him, mingling with the remorse that agitated him, not, indeed, without adding thereto something tender and consoling. All at once the bell ceased to ring; the tones of the organ rolled with a sweet harmony under the tottering vault of the choir, and, at the same moment, the monks, issuing from a sacristy a few paces from the renegade, vested in their long white scapulars over their black robe, defiled two by two, and, crossing the ruins of the old church, went to place themselves in the choir.

Near the sanctuary, on a raised stall, a monk went to take his place, and after the hymn of the night, the *Deus in adjutorium* was intoned. The sweet melancholy of one voice, which the renegade thought he recognized, struck him sensibly, and he listened to the end of the grave and solemn psalmody. Captivated by the charm of that pious and severe melody, softly accompanied by the sound of the organ, he still felt an ardent desire to know him whose voice had so struck him, and who occupied the Superior's stall; being unable to see his features, which were hidden beneath a large cowl, he would have been tempted to think it was the prior, if he had not been certain of the fidelity and vigilance of the janissaries whom he had so expressly commanded to keep watch over Father Marie Ange.

Nevertheless, the voice of him whom he saw seated there appeared to him to be that of the venerable prior, and he waited with anxiety till a favorable in-

cident should show him the monk's face. The psalmody at length ceased, and the monk threw back his cowl to ascend the altar. It was, indeed, the face of Father Marie Ange, pale and meagre, but yet calm and resigned.

Selim uttered a stifled cry of fury and astonishment, to see him free whom he had placed a prisoner under watch and ward, and thus to learn how little he could depend on those to whom he had given him in charge; but with his rage was mingled a strange feeling of satisfaction, as though he could have felt some joy to see his prisoner escape him.

Nevertheless, the tormenting thought of being deceived by his people, or the fear of a betrayal, made him leave the church precipitately, wishing to assure himself, by his own eyes, whether the friar had quitted the room where he left him a prisoner. His ignorance of the place caused him to wander for more than half an hour amongst the ruins of the monastery before he found the cloister leading to the buildings where he had left his troop. The feelings he had experienced had already lost their mysterious influence over him, and by the time he reached the apartment where he had left the friar, he felt more excited than ever against the guards to whom he had given him in charge.

To his great surprise, the door was well secured; he tried to push it in, but could not succeed; he knocked, was asked for the password, which he gave and the door opened. Two janissaries were on sen-

try, arms in hand. He cast a stern glance on them, and then took a rapid survey of the hall where the friar was not to be seen. "Where is the prisoner?" said he in a threatening tone to the Aga who presented himself before him.

The Aga shows him a sort of deep alcove at the end of the hall, to which the priest had asked permission to retire.

"Wretch!" cries Selim, "you have let him escape; he is no longer there."

"It is impossible," answers the Aga, pale with terror, "there is no other means of egress from this hall than that by which you entered." At the same time he seizes the only torch that was in the apartment and darts towards the recess. Selim follows him, and is struck with wonder on seeing Father Marie Ange, stretched on the floor, sleeping the quiet sleep of the just, his head resting on a stone.

"It is, indeed, he," murmurs the Pacha, regarding with astonishment the calm, wrinkled features of the prior. "It is he who sleeps here, and yet it was also he that I saw scarce half an hour ago in the church."

Saying these words, he takes a torch from the hands of the Aga, he examines the recess all through, but sees no means of egress, no door that can explain to him the apparition of the venerable religious amongst his brethren. What he could not perceive was a trap-door in the floor of the alcove, perfectly well known to the prior and his monks, by means of which he had been able, without noise, to go out and

assist at the midnight office, without any one remarking his absence, the recess being entirely dark.

His presence in the church was no less inexplicable to the Pacha, who was ignorant of this circumstance, and the punishment wherewith he had threatened the janissaries left in charge of Father Marie Ange was too terrible for him to fear neglect or treachery from them. His head full of these reflections, he promised himself that he would, on the following day, find the clue to all that appeared to him so inconceivable during the night, and to make every effort to discover the retreat of Amiranti, in case the monks were obstinate in concealing him. He lay down once more ; fatigue and dejection soon overcame him, so that he obtained some hours' repose.

When he awoke it was broad daylight, and the sun flooded the monastery with all his glory, showing more clearly the dilapidation and bareness of the ancient edifice. On a signal from its chief, the whole troop was under arms and ready to search every corner of that asylum of zeal and charity. After making their ablutions, the Turks eat the food prepared for them by the religious ; the Pacha then sent for the prior.

Father Marie Ange arrived between two janissaries ; some of the other religious followed him in silence, in the depths of their hearts beseeching the God of mercies to cast a look of pity on that venerable man, and rather to take the life of each of them which they offered up for his. As for him, he was

as usual, calm and resigned; he willingly made the sacrifice of his life; long enough had he labored in this valley of tears, and it would have been, doubtless, with great joy that he would present himself before God.

Seeing him arrive, the Pacha darted a threatening look at him; all his hatred and his avarice had resumed their sway, and he burned to have in his power alive the valiant chief of the Palicares and present his head to the Grand Vizier of the Ottoman Porte.

“Have you at length thought of consenting to my demand?” cried he to the venerable monk, as far off as he could see him; “have you reflected on what I told you yesterday? Consider your answer maturely, for your head depends on it, and I will no longer allow myself to be trifled with by a vile monk like you!”

“Pacha, you ask a thing impossible, a thing which my duty and my heart equally reject. Amiranti was given wounded to our care, and, were I to die, I will not give him up to his enemies; my religious, as well as myself, would suffer death sooner than make known to you the place of his retreat. Our house is a house of prayer and of refuge for all men; Christians and Mussulmans are in it treated with the same charity; as such it has been respected by both, from the beginning of the war, and if you yourself, being a wanderer and a fugitive, had taken refuge in it, although you are not a Christian, you would have received the

shelter and the succor we give to all. Leave us, then, in peace, to console the dying and care the wounded, and think of pursuing enemies worthy of your arms."

Finishing these words, spoken in accents of the most persuasive truth, the friar raised to him those eyes whose penetrating look had so stirred his heart the previous night. Trembling with anger, the renegade vainly tried to brave the power which that look exercised over him. He had not strength to answer him, and being unable to overcome the emotion that subdued him, he gave in a hesitating and broken voice the order to kill him, hoping that the sight of blood would revive his own ferocity, and terrify the monks, who would, perchance, consent to reveal the place of Amiranti's retreat, at sight of the bloody head of their superior. "Let the Giaour die!" he cried; "it is my will that he should die!"

The monks all threw themselves spontaneously on their knees, whilst the prior, in the hands of his executioners, preparing himself for death, said in a voice as sweet as the song of the dying swan: "Selim Pacha, you are a Mussulman, you desire my death; but I will pray Jesus Christ for you in the heaven where you are going to send me." Irritated by these words, the janissaries, raising their scimitars, cried around him: "Death to the Giaour! let him die,—he deserves death!"

At the same moment, two voices cried at once: "Stop!" It was that of the Pacha, who shrank for

the first time from the execution of a sanguinary order. The other voice was that of a man who had rushed into the hall. He wore the costume of the Palicare chiefs; his aspect was high and noble, though pale and wan, as one who had lost much of his strength. "Stop," he repeated in a clear, firm voice, "stop, cowards as you are, and stain yourselves not with a new crime, by shedding the blood of the venerable priest who cares and heals your brethren; I am Amiranti, I bring you my own head!"

Saying these generous words, Amiranti had drawn himself up to his full height; because of his weakness, he was leaning on the arm of a Palicare soldier who had remained with him in the monastery; this soldier had informed him of the arrival of Selim Pacha, and the brave chieftain, guessing the fate to which the prior of St. George would expose himself for him, he had forced the young Palicare to conduct him to the hall where the Pacha was; an unseen witness to the generous constancy of Father Marie Ange, he presented himself to his enemies at the very moment when the Pacha, overcome by his own feelings, stopped the execution to which he had condemned the prior.

At sight of the Palicare chief, the janissaries remained a moment motionless, and the Pacha, by a singular mixture of sensibility and ferocity, whilst applauding himself for having spared the life of the venerable religious, smiled with satisfaction at the

idea of having at last in his power the formidable chief for whose head so high a price was to be paid by the Grand Vizier.

At a sign from his hand, the Turks seized Amiranti and the young Greek, his companion. Father Marie Ange, escaped from death, reproached him for having thus given himself up and prevented the sacrifice of a useless life. "Your life useless, Father!" cried the Palicare vehemently; "ah! speak not so; for how many lives more precious than mine have you not saved, how many even of these cowardly Mussulmans who now insult and violate your holy and generous hospitality! But wo to them! the Greeks will avenge their chief; the Morea is already free; all our Christian brethren, enslaved at Stamboul, will soon become so; all Greece will break her chains; she will drive the Infidels from Europe, and in some years the cross of Christ shall shine again over St. Sophia's, over the Church of Constantine! Jesus Christ and St. Sophia's! is our battle cry, and it is the cry of a Greek chief falling under the scimitars of vile Mussulmans!"

These words, pronounced in a tone of firm conviction, and with all the enthusiasm of a great soul, struck the janissaries and their chief like a thunderbolt; soon, gnashing their teeth with rage, they recovered from their stupefaction, vomiting a thousand horrible imprecations against the Christians and against their prisoner; every sabre was raised to punish his generous temerity, but the Pacha wished to present him alive to the Grand Vizier, and a look of his gloomy

and terrible eyes restrained the transports of his followers and the effects of their fury.

The prior would fain have interceded for the brave Palicare; but all his efforts would only have envenomed still more the wrath of the Mussulmans. Besides, the Pacha had given the order for departure, so nothing now remained but to exhort the Palicare to die as a Christian. Amiranti was prepared; he knelt before the prior, asking him for the absolution of his sins; the janissaries, amazed at this action, did not dare to stop him; the Pacha looked moodily on, his soul disturbed with its memories and its remorse. Father Marie Ange, much affected, raised his hands and eyes to heaven, then, casting them down on Amiranti, he forgave him in the name of the Redeemer, blessed him, and ended with these touching words: "Go, valorous chief, be blessed, and advance to martyrdom!"

The janissaries waited for no more; they dragged Amiranti away; the Agas and their chief mounted their horses, which had been taken to the old stables of the monastery, and all descended rapidly towards the plain.



II.

SOME days had passed since Amiranti was torn from the hospitable cares of the monks of St. George. Greek chiefs, Palicare soldiers, had come by turns during this interval, to visit him whom they considered as a devoted friend, a faithful Christian, one of the most valorous chiefs of the insurgent army. But if their grief had been cruel on learning the way in which he had been taken from the monastery, they felt but the more ardently the desire to fight the Turks and avenge the cause of humanity outraged by those barbarous masters who had so long held them in bondage.

In a thatched cabin, half hidden in the hollow of a rock, in the centre of the forest that shaded the foot of the mountain on which arose the Monastery of St. George, a woman, surrounded by four young children crouched around her, presented an image of the deepest grief and distress. Her face was pale, her eyes, fixed and haggard, shed no tears; but they turned from time to time on her children, then looked up to heaven, as though expecting from there some direct relief in her great misery; deep sighs, heart-rending sobs, were her only language, her only answer to the sweet prattle, the fond caresses of her children, alarmed at the sight of her grief. This woman was the wife of Amiranti; her dwelling had been invaded by the Turks; she had to fly to the woods with her children and a single servant.

In the hope of seeing again her beloved husband, who she knew had been conveyed to the Monastery of St. George, she had approached that neighborhood, and craved an asylum from a poor shepherd, who eagerly offered her his cottage. But she was scarcely arrived when she learned that her husband, carried off by the renegade Selim Pacha, had been taken to Janina to undergo the atrocious torment destined for the Greek chiefs who fell into the hands of the Turks.

If Helena had heard of the glorious death of Amiranti, killed in battle for his country's deliverance, her heart would have bled, doubtless, yet she would have been none the less resigned; but to know him the prisoner of a cruel Pacha, to represent to herself all the torments by which a refined cruelty would make the noble Palicare expiate the valor he had so often shown against his enemies, was a grief a thousand times worse than the most cruel death.

Seeing her in such a state of anguish, her servant could conceive no other consolation for her save that of religion; in the hope of seeing his mistress submit to the decrees of Providence, which appeared willing to make Amiranti a martyr of the cross and of freedom, he resolved to go secretly to the prior of St. George, and entreat him to come to Helena with words of peace and comfort, he who knew so well how to dispose desolate souls to bear their sorrows with resignation.

On learning the desolation of Amiranti's wife, Fa-

ther Marie Ange, ever ready to share his neighbor's griefs, ever ready to pour the sublime consolations of religion into the bosom of the unhappy, descended from the monastery and followed the steps of the faithful servant who conducted him to the cabin where the unfortunate wife of the Palicare wept her husband's fate. A moment he stopped at the door, as if to collect his thoughts ; he fervently addressed himself to the Author of all consolation, implored the assistance of Her who supports and comforts the afflicted, and besought Mary to lend him her aid with the unfortunate Helena.

From the place where he stood he heard her sobs and sighs, and he felt his heart weighed down with sorrow in presence of so much anguish. The servant opened the door ; the good monk enters the cottage ; at sight of him Helena's grief seems to increase ; she darts forward, throws herself at the old man's feet, and embraces his knees. Her heart appears ready to break ; but the tears at length find their way under her heavy eyelids.

After a long silence—"Think," said the venerable old man, "think of Mary who suffered such profound grief ; and if your lips cannot speak, let your heart discover to her all the abyss of your miseries ; from Her alone, from Mary who suffered so cruelly seeing her only Son, her Creator, and her God, beaten with rods and fastened to a cross, from Her alone can you expect any relief in your affliction."

"Father ! father !" cried the unfortunate woman,

"I have not yet had strength to do so, but the good Virgin will forgive me!——"

Saying these words, choked with sighs and tears, she raised her hands to heaven; but there is nothing like speaking of heaven, pronouncing the virginal name of Mary, to assuage the most cruel grief. Helena, without perceiving it, was somewhat relieved; the amiable Mother of the Redeemer already poured into her soul the grace of resignation.

Father Marie Ange perceived the fruit his words had already borne; he inwardly returned thanks to the Lord; then, pointing to Heaven, "Let us pray," he cried, "let us pray all together, my daughter, that God may watch over your husband, yourself, and your children, and to look with favor on the noble cause for which you all suffer at this moment."

"Alas! father," she replied, "how can I pray? my lips refuse all prayer; I can only speak of my woes——"

"Well! speak of them, my daughter, tell them to God; Jesus Christ suffered too, He knows the humanity wherewith He clothed Himself for us. He knows our weakness, and compassionates it; He will hear you; and to speak to the Redeemer of our sufferings is to show our faith and ask his assistance."

"Father, you see these poor children; can I look at them and not think that they will, perhaps, in a few days be made orphans, and in so cruel a manner! The Turks! father, the Turks!——"

"Let us pray, my daughter, let us pray that God

may appease His wrath ; your husband is not dead he may, perchance, be restored to you."

"Father, father, what say you?" cried Helena in a transport of joy, fear, and hope.

"Let us pray, my daughter, that God may hear us and send us the spirit of meekness and of clemency!"

The venerable monk commanded by his voice, by his gesture, by an air of holy authority ; his face appeared to shine with a celestial splendor. He had fallen on his knees. Helena, her children, and her servant had prostrated themselves beside him, regarding him with astonishment in respectful silence. They saw the lips of the venerable priest moving in holy recollection, and they followed him, if not in words, at least in heart, in the prayers he addressed to God with so much fervor.

At the end of some minutes, Father Marie Ange arose ; he raised his hands over the Palicare's wife and children who remained prostrate around him ; he blessed them in a solemn manner.

"Now," said he then, "take courage, pray for your husband, for your father, pray for me, that Heaven may restore to you him you love, that the Lord may favor the design I have formed."

"My father, my good father, may you be blessed!" cried the afflicted wife and mother, "God has made you the benefactor of the poor, the physician of the sick and the wounded, and the consoler of the afflicted. May Jesus Christ be your guide, and may the Holy Virgin accompany you!"

The good monk opened the door, hastily wrote some words in pencil on a scrap of paper which he charged the servant to bring to the monastery, and, with a big knotty stick in hand, and his breviary under his arm, he quitted the cabin and started off amid the blessings of the afflicted family, on a winding path that traversed the forest, directing his course to the northeast.

At some leagues from the place of his departure, Father Marie Ange had procured a horse; he then took the road that led to Janina, where he knew that Selim Pacha had conveyed his prisoner. It was to that city that the Grand Vizier was to go to witness the execution of several illustrious Greeks, whom the fate of arms had thrown into the hands of the Turks.

The lake that bathed the walls of Janina, which had witnessed many years before the cruelties of the celebrated Ali, was to serve as a tomb for these gallant chiefs, after they had undergone the odious torments wherewith the Turks thought to revenge their attempts in favor of Greek freedom.

It was time that Father Marie Ange should arrive at Janina, if he wished to make any attempt to see Amiranti. The Vizier was in the city, and several of his unfortunate countrymen had already been put to the torture. The same day that Father Marie Ange entered Janina, the Vizier left it by another gate; his absence was to continue several days; at the same time it postponed the death of

those of the prisoners who had not yet suffered ; so the venerable monk hoped, on hearing this news, that Amiranti might be amongst them, and that there might, consequently, be still some chance of seeing and saving him.

At that period of war and trouble, the presence of a stranger, but especially of a Christian, always excited grave suspicions in the cities inhabited by Greeks, and which had not yet shaken off the yoke of the Turks. The latter had reason to fear that he came to conspire with his countrymen and incite them to rise against their oppressors. These motives, which were not unknown to Father Marie Ange, did not prevent him from going boldly into Janina ; but no sooner had he entered its gates than he saw himself arrested by several janissaries, whom he asked to conduct him to the Pacha commanding in the city. It was Selim, whom we have already seen at the Monastery of St. George, and whose cruelty was said to emulate that of the too famous Ali.

The prior had, doubtless, everything to fear from him ; but he counted on the Almighty's protection and the object of his holy mission. Without having the hope of obtaining from Selim the life of Amiranti, he, nevertheless, had that of being allowed to visit the noble captive, which was for the moment sufficient for his purpose. Moreover, he had confidence even in the justice of his enterprise, and, if he could not reckon on much human aid, he hoped that the God to

whom he had devoted his life and his labors would never desert him.

Several janissaries had recognized the good prior, and, even before his arrival at the Pacha's palace, his name and his business had preceded him. No obstacle was opposed to his entrance, and he freely traversed the apartment leading to that where the renegade was. It was a Moorish apartment, surmounted by a dome, which gave light to the room; it was decorated with Asiatic luxury, but with European elegance; for the furniture had been brought thither at great expense from Paris; mirrors of extraordinary height and clearness adorned the panels, and the hangings were of the finest silks of Lyons.

The Pacha was carelessly stretched on a divan; he had in his mouth a long amber pipe, the bowl of which rested on a little pedestal of silver richly chased; from the pipe escaped an odoriferous smoke, which perfumed the whole apartment. The sight of the prior appeared to disturb him; he made a sign to some persons who stood around him to retire, and when the monk reached his presence he found himself alone with him.

Father Marie Ange stopped some paces from his divan and saluted him respectfully. The renegade abruptly raised himself to a sitting posture, and cried in a harsh tone: "Monk, what would you of me?"

The prior, at this question, raised his head, which he had cast down submissively, threw back his hood, and, folding his arms across his chest, regarded the

Pacha mournfully. "Pacha," said he in an agitated voice, "fame has everywhere published your fury and your wickedness. . . ."

These words made the renegade shudder; he made an angry gesture, and, regarding the monk with eyes of fire: "Know you," said he, "to whom you speak in a manner so audacious?"

"I know," answered the prior, "that I speak to a man whom fame has made more wicked than he really is, to a Christian who has denied his country and his God. . . ."

"And whence do you know it?" murmured the Pacha, with an agitation difficult to describe?

"Pacha," answered the priest calmly and sadly, "I have seen much of men, and I have the experience of years; God has given to my ministry the art of sounding consciences, and I sounded yours at our first interview——"

"Be silent, be silent," cried Selim, turning pale with terror; "be silent, and say immediately what brings you hither, or I will have you driven from my presence."

"I will obey you; you are said to be very wicked and very cruel, but the crimes attributed to you should not be yours; why do you follow the ways of the Mussulmans?"

Here the monk stopped; he regarded with that penetrating look of his the renegade seated on his divan, and his look troubled him more than ever. Selim, touched by these words so sweet, yet so cut-

ting, waited in indescribable anxiety to see what the father was aiming at. "I thought," continued the religious, "that a man who had formerly known the sweet feelings of the heart, who was taught in his infancy to know and love Jesus Christ, the meekest of all men, Jesus Christ his God and his Saviour, who redeemed him at the price of His blood, would not refuse a favor to a poor monk who comes to ask it in the name of his Divine Master."

"How? what mean you?"

"Pacha, I have seen a cottage where the wind and the rain penetrate on every side; in that cottage I saw a woman, surrounded by four little children, moaning around their desolate mother. That woman laments a husband doomed to the most cruel torment, and her children weep the absence of their unfortunate father——"

Father Marie Ange stopped again. The tears fell from his eyes as he watched the renegade, whose brow darkened at the words of the monk. "Selim," resumed the old priest in a voice trembling with emotion, "one word from your mouth, one single word, will restore a husband to his weeping wife, a father to his poor children; I ask of you the life of the Palicare Amiranti."

At the name of Amiranti the Pacha raised his flashing eyes. "Audacious monk," cried he, furiously repulsing the religious with his foot,—“know you what you ask; know you that for so much audacity your head might one day roll with that of the man

whose pardon you implore. I have heard you but too patiently. . . . Know, now, that it was Amiranti who killed my son, the most beautiful of all my children,—on the plains of Livadia, where he fell dying at my side. O my child, my beautiful Selim,” continued the renegade, shedding tears of grief and rage, “Selim, my son, where art thou now? I was forced to abandon your bleeding body and fly before him who snatched you from my love——”

Saying these words, the renegade struck his head with despair, without paying any attention to the monk, who remained before him mute with astonishment, and waited, praying in silence for that unhappy man, till his fury and his affliction should have subsided. If the Pacha refused him the life of Amiranti, there remained to the prior but one simple way of accomplishing his design; it was to obtain permission to visit, at least, the valiant Palicare before he was put to the torture.

“Monk,” said Selim at length, “you know not what it is to see a son carried off in the flower of his age, to see him fall expiring by your side, to see him grow pale from loss of blood, to hear his last complaints, and to see him die, without bidding him a last farewell, without embracing him,—to abandon his body, and leave it a prey to vultures and wild beasts. . . . My son! my child! my Selim!—But thou shalt be revenged!—Every drop of Amiranti’s blood shall pay for that which he so cruelly shed——”

Father Marie Ange kept silence; then, when he

saw the Pacha, his head bowed on his chest, and absorbed in his reflections: "Selim," said he, seizing his hands, and speaking in his most persuasive accents, "you will graciously hear me, you will hear me in the name of that child whom you loved so much, whose cruel death you so painfully deplore, you will hear me——"

Selim remained mute and motionless; but his features bespoke his trouble, he was more sensible to these unexpected words than he chose to let appear; his hands trembled in those of the prior, although he could not account for the feeling that filled his whole soul. "You will hear me," continued the good monk; "I no longer ask you to grant me Amiranti's life, but you will permit me to see him once before he dies, to tell him the last words of his wife and children. In the name of your beloved Selim, let me speak once more with the Palicare!——"

The Pacha answered not, but his silence indicated, nevertheless, how deeply the voice, the manners, and the look of Father Marie Ange touched him. At length he arose, but this time without anger; he fixed on the religious an indefinable look. "Father," said he, "you have conquered; I know not what there is in you so strangely attractive, so sweet and yet so severe, but whatever it is, you have overcome my wrath; ask me not to spare Amiranti's life, I can never grant you that, pray you ever so much, and all the charm you exercise over me could not enable you to accomplish that. But a secret voice tells me to

grant your last request. I know not when the Grand Vizier will return, but until he does, I permit you once a day to visit the Palicare captive, but I forbid you to remain more than an hour with him. I am going to give the order to the janissaries to allow you to pass when you will."

Father Marie Ange had at length obtained a part of what he desired: to see Amiranti was the last ray of hope, it was thereupon that he based the accomplishment of what he had promised the Palicare's wife; what thanksgivings did he not, therefore, render inwardly to God. He warmly thanked the Pacha; but in the fear of exciting his suspicions and allowing him to guess at his projects, he permitted him not to see all the joy his acquiescence gave him.

Selim clapped his hands; an aga came to receive his orders and was charged to make them known to the officers who guarded the prisons. He conducted the prior, who saw, in passing over the esplanade of the palace, an example of the frightful torment to which the Greek chiefs were exposed. It was that of impalement. Those unfortunates were fixed alive on an iron pike, like a spit driven into the ground as a sort of stake; this pike ran up through the body, and went out at the back of the neck between the two shoulders. It was a fearful torment; for those hapless victims scarcely ever died all at once; they often lived for some time, suffering the most excruciating tortures, exposed in the open air to the scorching rays of a southern sun, stung by flies and insects of

every kind who fed on their bleeding wounds, and sometimes half devoured by birds of prey.

Three Greek chiefs were still fastened to the pale, when Father Marie Ange passed that way to go to the prisons; his hair stood on end with horror at this frightful spectacle, his heart beat so violently that it seemed ready to burst the bonds that bound it, and the blood froze in his veins. He raised his hands to heaven, praying for those heroic victims, and he was hurrying away from so cruel a spectacle, when he heard himself called by his name, but in a feeble, dying voice.

He turned back; it was one of the three unhappy chiefs; he was still alive, and had sometimes seen Father Marie Ange at St. George's Monastery; half extinguished as his eyes were by suffering, he had recognized him. The charitable monk hastened to approach him, and asked him in a trembling voice if he could do anything for him. "I thirst," murmured the unfortunate, through the death rattle; "if I had a little water."—"Poor unfortunate!" answered the father, looking around him with anguish, in the hope of seeing wherewith to satisfy the hapless sufferer.

Through respect for him the aga had stopped; the monk's feeling of compassion had communicated itself to his heart, and he ran a little way to fetch a large jar which he filled at a fountain; he brought it to the Father, who thanked him with a look, and ran to give a drink to the unhappy Greek, whose eyes alone could express all his gratitude. "Thanks, fa-

ther, thanks !" said he in a voice somewhat stronger ; " thanks for your pity and your mercy ; now give me your blessing ; I shall die easier."

The prior, weeping, gave him absolution for all his sins, and a few moments after, the unfortunate chief yielded his soul to his God, for whose name he had suffered such cruel torments.

The gate of the prison was but a few paces from there ; it opened at the aga's bidding ; after having received his orders, the jailer conducted Father Marie Ange to the dreary dungeon where Amiranti lay, expecting a cruel death.

A time-worn flight of steps descended at the end of a gloomy passage greenish with damp ; three bars of iron, so strong as to resist all human strength, sufficed to prevent any attempt at deliverance by those imprisoned by the Pacha's orders under those gloomy arches, whence they issued only to go to death.

The jailer carried a torch to light the monk ; when he opened the door a fetid smell escaped ; Amiranti, lying on straw in a corner of his dungeon, arose, supposing that they came to conduct him to the torture. But the jailer retired, warning the monk that he would only have to knock at the door to have it opened, when he wished to get out.

Astonished at this visit, Amiranti did not, at first, recognize the prior ; but his eyes, becoming accustomed to the light of the lamp, soon discovered, under the ample hood which partly concealed the man's

features, the venerable priest who had resolved to sacrifice his life to save him.

"My father! my father!" cried he, throwing himself at his feet; "is it, indeed, you who come to visit the dungeon of an unhappy man condemned to death?"

"My son," answered the prior, raising him, "a sacred duty, that of charity, obliged me to visit and console you. Knowing you were in prison, sick and wounded, I made an effort with the Pacha, who gave me leave to see you every day."

For a whole hour, Father Marie Ange continued to converse with the captive, always presenting to him motives of confidence in Jesus Christ. Before leaving him he examined his wounds and dressed them, and did not leave him till he had made him promise to do whatever he required of him.

Father Marie Ange continued for four or five days to descend into Amiranti's prison, and the chief recovered all his strength by the prior's care and his words of comfort and encouragement. Almost every day, too, the Pacha, who loved to converse with him, had him summoned to his apartments, where he often kept him for several hours at a time. The good priest availed himself of the opportunity to gain the renegade's confidence more and more, and inspire him with better sentiments.

This confidence of the Pacha's authorized the prior to go without fear through all parts of the city; mere curiosity seemed to guide him in his walks, but it

was really a knowledge of the places he sought to acquire, for the benefit of Amiranti, if happily he succeeded in liberating him, to which end he was directing all his efforts.

The palace of the Pacha rose on a rock bathed by the deep waters of the lake of Janina, which stretched far away into the country; several footpaths descended from the esplanade that separated the palace from Amiranti's prison towards the lake shore; the prior had gone down there more than once towards evening, as if to take the air, going out on the lake in a small bark belonging to the Pacha; the sentinels, already accustomed to see him, allowed him to go and come as he pleased, and it was always on leaving the prison that he went to take his sail on the lake.

At length he judged that it was time to put his design into execution; he had been eight days at Janina; the Grand Vizier's return was spoken of, and the cruel executions of the Greek chiefs, which his departure had delayed, were to commence again as soon as he returned to the city. The prior had made all his preparations, but without apprising Amiranti, to whom he would only speak of his project at the moment of executing it. He went to a Jew and ordered him to make him a costume exactly like that which he wore. that is to say, a long black monastic robe with its cowl. Such a garment did not require much work; it was ready, therefore, in a few hours; he took it to the house where he lodged, put it on under

his own, so as to conceal it the more easily, and so set out to visit Amiranti.

It was near six o'clock, and sunset was not far distant; but as he passed the first gate of the palace, a janissery stopped him quickly, and announced to him that the Pacha had commanded him to bring the monk to him as soon as he entered the palace. Father Marie Ange trembled lest his design should have been discovered; he hastily recommended himself to God, then fearlessly advanced towards the Pacha's apartments.

Arrived at the saloon where he usually conversed with him, he found only a negro, who told him, on the part of his master, that he would please to follow him. Still more surprised, he allowed himself to be conducted; he traversed several other apartments furnished with magnificence, and at length reached that where the Pacha awaited him. A tapestry of cloth of gold covered a door, beyond which he heard some noise, and thought he could distinguish sobs and groans.

The negro clapped his hands, the door opened, and the monk was shown in. In the middle of a chamber decorated with all possible magnificence, there lay in a cradle a little child whose paleness and convulsive movements seemed to presage the approach of death; several women were gathered around the cradle, and the Pacha lying on an ottoman in a corner of the room, his head on a silken cushion, appeared buried in the deepest grief.

The child was his son; he had just been stricken suddenly with one of those diseases often unaccountable, and yet common to childhood; the child, who had been well but a few hours before, was now dying; but the Pacha, having no confidence in the physicians of the country, for the most part ignorant, was already in despair and sunk in the deepest affliction, when he thought of Father Marie Ange; he remembered the care he and his monks gave to the sick and wounded who were brought to the monastery, and sure of having no quack to deal with, he had just given orders to seek him everywhere, when the prior arrived at the palace.

Seeing him enter, the renegade rose quickly and ran to take him by the hand; he drew him towards the cradle, and, his heart too full to utter the slightest word, he showed him the child.

The good priest immediately understood what the matter was; the trouble he had experienced was instantly dispelled; he took the child in his arms to examine him more closely, and soon perceived whence his malady came. The father watched him with anxiety. "Send every one from the room," said the religious, with an air which appeared to reassure the Pacha a little; "you alone can assist at what I am about to do." A sign from the Pacha made all disappear.

"You love this child," said the prior in a tone of deep feeling. "his life is precious to you; I pray God to restore him to health by the hand of His servant;

but in restoring the life of the body, I must at the same time restore that of the soul; Pacha, give me some water, whilst I prepare my instruments to bleed him."

The renegade understood the prior's words. "Do what you will, Father," said he in a tremulous voice "provided you restore him to life, I am content."

So saying he ran to seek some water, which he brought in a large silver basin. Father Marie Ange drew from under his habit a portfolio containing several surgical instruments, took a lancet and pricked the child's arm: the blood flowed immediately. The Pacha followed his son's motions with lively anxiety; the basin trembled in his hands, and his lip quivered with strong emotion when he saw the holy religious fill the hollow of his hand with water, then pour it with inexpressible calmness on the child's forehead, saying the sacramental words of baptism, "I baptize thee, in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, and I give thee the name of Mary Joseph."

The Pacha could no longer withhold his agitation; he uttered a cry, set down the basin, and ran to throw himself on the sofa. The child came to himself more and more; Father Marie Ange then stopped the blood which continued to flow, kissed the infant on the forehead, and laying him in his cradle, he announced to Selim that he had nothing more to fear, that the child was saved, and that he must be left to repose.

Selim took his hand, and with deep feeling pressed it between both his.

He clapped his hands, the attendants came in, and Selim had the Father conducted back to the esplanade. The history of the miraculous cure which the religious had operated was soon known by agas and janissaries. This recital made a deep impression upon them; the respect they had for the monk appeared to increase, and he augured favorably from it for the execution of his design.

The sun was long since set when Father Marie Ange entered the prison. Amiranti was impatiently expecting him, almost despairing of his return. "The Vizier returns to-morrow or the next day," said the monk, when they were alone.

"And you come, father, to prepare me to die," answered the generous Palicare in a voice of gentle resignation.

"No, my friend," replied the prior, "I come to fulfil the promise I made your wife to save you."

"My wife!—save me!" cried Amiranti in amazement. "Ah! poor Helena! you have seen her, then, father! she did not die of grief!"

"I saw her, my son!—but we have no time to converse now; know only that I promised to do all I could to restore you to your wife and children; it was for that I came, and you promised to obey me in all things——"

"Yes, father!" answered the Palicare, still more astonished.

“Well! take this garment,” said the religious, giving him his robe; “you shall quit this prison immediately; but without speaking to any one, lest you should be discovered. You will take care to cover your face with the cowl; you will follow, to your right, the line of the prison buildings; as soon as you have passed them, you will descend the first path you meet; you will reach the lake shore, and there you will find a little boat; you will take your seat therein, and, if I do not join you at the end of an hour, you will set out alone without waiting for me.”

Saying these words,—which the chief heard with an astonishment like that of a man who wakes up after a painful dream,—the father clothed him in his habit. Rousing himself, at last, from his stupor:

“But you, father,” he exclaimed, “will you remain here exposed to all the insults, all the cruelty of the Pacha?”

“Fear nothing for me, think only of yourself; hasten to set out; time is too precious not to profit by it; for me, I have nothing to fear; I hope to re-join you in less than an hour.”

“I will not go, father!—rather death and the most cruel torments than to leave you here.”

“Amiranti, you have promised to obey me; I insist on your departing.”

Father Marie Ange spoke with an authority impossible to resist; seeing that his efforts were useless, the latter bent his head in silence and prepared to

obey. "Bless me, father!" said he, falling on his knees; "but, above all, think of your own safety!"

"Have no fears on that head, my son," replied the prior after having blessed him; "I have nothing to fear from the Pacha; but for you, if I do not rejoin you, I command you to use every effort to save yourself from the fury of the Turks."

Amiranti bowed in token of obedience; he fervently pressed the old man's hand, and the prior knocked at the door as usual. The night was already advanced, so that the jailers were gone to bed; one of them rose at the noise, and came grumbling to open the door; seeing the monk's habit, he allowed the wearer to pass without obstruction, supposing it was Father Marie Ange. Once outside the prison, Amiranti followed, without encountering any difficulty, the road marked out for him by his deliverer, and found the boat as he told him at the edge of the lake.

The prior, left alone in the dungeon, the door of which was closed upon him after the departure of the Greek, waited,—praying God to crown his undertaking with success,—till the jailer was again in bed and had time to be fast asleep. He reckoned on the confusion and bewilderment in which people are wont to find themselves when suddenly woke up by an unexpected noise, hoping that the jailer might take the first interruption for a dream. After the lapse of an hour he knocked at the door a second time, as he had done for Amiranti. The jailer, woke up again by the

noise he hears, listens with surprise; the blows are redoubled; he rises, goes down to the dungeon, and rebukes the supposed captain for disturbing his sleep.

"You are very tardy in your movements," answers the religious boldly; "hasten to let me out, or I shall inform the Pacha of your conduct."

Hearing this, and recognizing the prior's voice, the jailer, astonished and confused, like one under the influence of a dream, hastened to open the door of the dungeon, which he carefully closed after the monk.

"I know not how it is, and I pray you say nothing of it to the Pacha, but it seemed to me that I let you out before."

The prior was gone without answering; and in a few moments he was beside Amiranti, blessing God for the success of his project. Seeing him arrive, the Palicare threw himself into his arms, and both returned thanks to God for having permitted them to behold each other again. Both then seized the oars and rowed rapidly away from Janina. Amiranti knew some faithful Greeks who were intrenched in the mountains; it was to them he thought of repairing; the night favored their flight, and in a few hours they were beyond all pursuit.

Some leagues from Janina they landed; having sent their boat adrift on the lake, so that it might give no clue to their retreat, they advanced into the woods that bordered on the lake. Amiranti was at no loss to find his way; the woods, the defiles the

narrowest pathways, were well known to him; all Thessaly and Macedonia were as familiar to him as the place of his birth. Father Maria Ange, accustomed as he was to cross the mountains, followed him without difficulty; they walked all the rest of the night without meeting the least obstruction, steering their course for Livadia.

When day began to dawn, the first rays of light revealed to them the towers of an ancient castle, the Byzantine style of which showed that its erection dated from the Lower Empire. Difficult of access, hidden in the woods amongst steep rocks, it was a fitting retreat for the insurgent Greeks. It was one of their principal stations, an arsenal, moreover, where they came to arm to fight the infidels. The Turks had tried more than once to surprise it; but their efforts had always been useless. As soon as Amiranti and the prior were perceived, sentinels placed on every point of the surrounding rocks, a platoon of Greeks advanced cautiously to reconnoitre the new-comers, and although there was nothing to apprehend from the two monks, it was to be feared that that was a disguise taken by the enemy to hide their manœuvres.

The chief in command was one of Amiranti's friends, he advanced; Amiranti throws off his habit, they recognize each other; both are in each other's arms in a moment, whilst cries of joy and astonishment rise around them. Those cries resound throughout the castle; the other chiefs run, and it is

nothing but embraces, tears of joy, and continual acclamations.

All surrounded Amiranti and the prior, kissing the hands, the feet, the robe of the venerable priest, with transports of joy and gratitude; each one must needs help to carry him in triumph to the castle. On arriving there, the prior asked to be taken to the chapel; he celebrated Mass, at which all the inmates assisted with perfect recollection, returning thanks to God for having restored to them the valorous Amiranti.

The same day a small troop set out in search of his wife and children; the prior, on his side, wrote to the Pacha to appease his wrath; but especially to prevail upon him not to make it fall on Amiranti's late jailers. "I saved the life of your child," said he, concluding his letter; "I deserved a reward; but, in the uncertainty of obtaining it, I made use of the means which Providence had placed at my disposal to save Amiranti and spare you a new crime. You have been a Christian, may you again become one! I will pray to God for you and your family, and be assured you will be blest, if you begin by forgiving."

A young peasant was charged to convey this letter, which reached the Pacha soon after he was informed of the Palicare's escape. His wrath was terrible; the captive's jailers were thrown into prison, and immediately replaced by other men whom he judged more capable of exercising the office. Death was the punishment he reserved for the others, when he

received Father Marie Ange's letter; it made a deep and lively impression on his mind, and the first effect of that impression was to recall the troops he had sent in pursuit of the monk and Amiranti; but to restore the Palicare's jailers to liberty he awaited the return of the Grand Vizier, to whom the flight of the Greek warrior could easily be made appear as an ordinary escape.

Having sent off his letter, Father Marie Ange returned to his monastery, anxious to withdraw himself from the transports of gratitude and the proofs of affection manifested for him by all the Greeks.



III

SEVERAL months had passed since Amiranti had been so unexpectedly restored to his wife and children. Events succeeded each other with rapidity, and more than one combat, in which the Cross had remained victorious over the crescent, had been fought by the Greeks against the Turks.

For many days nothing had been spoken of in Livadia but a battle which had taken place on the plain that separated the mountains around St. George's Monastery from the city of Missolonghi. The Turkish army, three times more numerous than that of the Greeks, had been entirely defeated. Of five hundred janissaries who had accompanied the Pacha of Salonica, there was left but one man to bear to that city the news of their disaster. A Turkish town, situate in a fertile plain some leagues from Missolonghi, and in which the Pacha had established his headquarters, had been surprised without defence after the battle, and the insurgents, having pillaged it and the Turkish camp, burned it to the ground, leaving only ruined walls blackened by the fire.

This was an opportunity for the monks of Mount St. George to exercise their charity; nearly all the community had gone down to the plain to succor the wounded on both sides, to administer the last sacraments to the dying, and pour the saving water of baptism on the head of those who, closing their eyes to

the light of this world, desired to open them to the divine sun of eternity. As far as they were able, they had conveyed the wounded to the monastery, each party safely separated from the other, and the ancient halls of St. George's transformed, for the twentieth time, perhaps, into a vast hospital, resounded with the blessings which, in touching unison, Christians and Mussulmans unceasingly invoked on the head of their unwearying benefactors.

Every hour in the day the gate-bell of the monastery was heard to ring; now it was a Turk, now a Greek; the former wounded, coming to crave assistance from the venerable religious; the latter a fugitive, coming to St. George to seek an asylum. Pursued, tracked in every direction through the forest and the mountains, in the monastery alone the unhappy Turks could be sure of finding a refuge.

It was eight days already since the battle had taken place; most of the wounded had been able to return home, the Turks with a passport from the prior. A small number only still awaited their complete cure in the monastery. The night office was just ended, and the organ was still breathing forth, under the ruined arches of St. George's Church, the last notes of its plaintive harmony; one by one the monks retired to their cells, till the dawn commenced to whiten the dark summits of the mountains. The gray tints of the morning twilight slowly replaced the shades of night, and objects began to be faintly discernible through the mists of the dawn.

As the prior was returning to his chamber, a loud ring at the gate-bell announced the hand of a man in distress.

The prior took a lamp and followed one of the monks whose office it was to receive strangers. On reaching the ancient courtyard, he perceived a man in tattered garments, his beard neglected, his eyes wild and haggard, his face pale with want and misery. His turban announced a Turk, and a rich poignard, with a chased gold handle covered with precious stones, showed that, notwithstanding the disorder of his person, it was a man of distinction. He carried in his arms a young infant scarcely two years old, whose features denoted hunger and suffering. Seeing the prior approach, he threw himself at his feet, presenting his child: "Father, take pity on this child," cried he, "I am pursued since the last battle; my poor little one is dying of cold and hunger." "Come with me, my friend," said the venerable religious, "you shall have all that is necessary, you and this child."

Father Marie Ange took the child; the Turk followed him, looking round him apprehensively. Arrived at the infirmary, the Father Hospitaller made a fire, and prepared food for the stranger; they made the child drink some goat's milk, then gave the forlorn wanderers a plentiful repast.

For two hours all were again asleep in the monastery, when the bell, rung as violently as before, once more awoke the whole community. It was the time

for rising; the religious quitted their cells to go and sing the morning office in the church; the rising sun lit up the ruins of the ancient abbey; at the arched doorway leading to the old courtyard, the day-star's rays fell on a numerous troop of Greek soldiers whose glittering arms shone bright as the morning. It was rare to see so many men penetrating at once into the monastery, and it was the first time since the arrival of Selim Pacha that such a sight had been seen there.

The troop marched in good order; it entered the monastery, following the long Byzantine cloisters which led to the part then inhabited by the monks; a fiery and impetuous young chief walked at their head. A monk went before them; astonished to see so many people, he asks the chief what he is going to do with so many armed men: "To seek a fugitive of whom we have been eight days in pursuit, without being able to find him," answers the chief; "the Pacha of Salonica who has taken refuge here this night; a shepherd saw him climb the path that leads to St. George's."

Amazed at the violation of a sacred asylum, and by Greeks and Christians, the monk waits to hear no more; he runs in haste to the infirmary whither the prior had gone to visit the guest who had arrived over night, and tells him the news. "Great God! it is I whom they pursue," cried the unhappy Turk who had just awoke; "I am the Pacha of Salonica!"—"Fear nothing," answers the prior placing himself be-

fore him, "they are Greeks, Christians, they will not harm you."

In his astonishment he knew not what to think; he could not understand how it was that the Greeks, who had always had the most profound respect for him, should dare to present themselves in a troop at the monastery to tear away a fugitive from its shelter. Before he has time to conceal the Pacha of Salonica, the insurgents are at the door of the infirmary; they enter: "It is he! it is he!" they all cry out at once on perceiving the unhappy Pacha, who tries to conceal from them his face already so much subdued by suffering and fatigue.

They rush towards him. The unfortunate takes his child, and in despair places him in the prior's arms. "Stop, unhappy men!" cries Father Marie Ange, darting a severe look on the Greeks and their chief; "since when have Greeks, the soldiers of the Cross, conceived the impious thought of violating an asylum always respected, consecrated in the name of Jesus Christ?"

Saying these words, the prior's eyes flashed fire, his voice, full of authority, arrests and freezes the soldiers; their chief advances alone towards him; he speaks to him with respect. "Father," said he, "we have always respected St. George's Monastery, we still honor your person. This is the first time, remember, that we came here in a troop, and we pray you to give up a fugitive to us.—You appear sur-

prised.—But you do not recognize this man whom you so generously defend——”

“Unhappy man, be silent ; were it my most cruel enemy, you should only take him hence by trampling on my body——”

“But, father !” cried the young chief, “he is the murderer of our brethren, and he was also the first who violated this sanctuary——”

“Jesus ! my Redeemer !” cries Father Marie Ange, fixing his eyes on the Mussulman with touching interest ; “is it possible ; can this be Selim Pacha ?”

“It is, indeed, himself,” murmured the renegade, “and this is the child you baptized.”

“It is he,” cried the soldiers, one louder than the other ; “he first violated this sanctuary, he shall now go with us ; we will tear him away as he did Amiranti.”

The prior, addressing the soldiers with a majestic air : “Are you Christians or barbarians,” he exclaims, “that the cruelty of a Turk, an infidel, is to serve you as an example ? In the name of Jesus Christ Our Redeemer, depart hence, and let not one of you dare to touch a hair of this man’s head !——”

This time the troop obeyed ; all bowed their heads with a terrified air ; they were already sensible of the fault they had committed by their violence ; at a sign from their chief they prostrated themselves : “Pardon, father,” cried the young man in a penitent tone ; “pardon, in the name of Christ Our Saviour ! forgive us as we forgive this man, and give us your benediction !”

"Pardon ! pardon !" repeated all the soldiers in a tone of earnest supplication.

"Go now !" said Father Marie Ange giving them his blessing, after restoring the child to Selim's arms.

All then arose and retired, leaving the renegade alone with the worthy religious.

"Pardon !" said Selim in his turn ; "pardon me, too, for my sins, my numberless crimes !"

"Unfortunate !" said the Father mildly, "God will forgive you, if you sincerely repent of them !"

"Oh ! yes, I repent, but can I hope to obtain pardon of so many crimes ? You already know that I am an unhappy renegade ; but it is only now, in presence of your exceeding great goodness, that I feel all the horror of my apostacy and my criminal conduct. Born a Christian, brought up by virtuous parents, I disdained their counsels, to follow my sinful inclinations ; after seeing my father and mother die of grief, squandered their fortune in profligate pursuits, I came to Turkey ; some accomplishments, acquired in my early education, obtained for me the Sultan's favor ; I made myself a Mussulman to please him, and in a short time I became what you have seen me, the fiercest and most odious Pacha of all this country. To stifle my remorse, I bathed in blood. Ten months ago, when I saw you, your sight, your words, disturbed me beyond expression. I know not what sentiment attracted me towards you, and I cannot tell you the power your very look had over me. At the same time the God I had abandoned

by an effect of His mercy, and to draw me, doubtless, from the abyss into which I was plunged, sent me remorse. For the first time I cast a look over all the past, and, if it had not been for the resentment and the lively grief I felt, and still feel, for my son's death, if it had not been for the influence of my criminal habits, the facility I found in avenging myself, I would, perchance, have set Amiranti at liberty. My avarice, the desire of revenge, prevailed once again over my remorse; but I can assure you I felt a sort of joy on hearing of his flight. Your letter decided me to put a stop to the pursuit I had ordered to bring him back dead or alive. I felt at the time more remorse than ever.

“To distract myself from it, I took an active part in war; against my will, it drew me once again in the direction of your monastery; named Pacha of Salonica, I had brought to my headquarters this son whom you had baptized, and whom I love more than my own life. I counted on victory; God, to punish me, disposed it otherwise; I was overcome, and my troops cut to pieces. I ran to my headquarters to save my son; I had barely time to carry him off, when the enemy arrived in pursuit of me. Wandering a fugitive in the woods, pursued by the insurgents who sought my life, I should have fallen into their hands with my child, if I had not thought of the Prior of St. George's.

“Yesterday even I knew not whither to turn; I had been eight days wandering on chance, when a shep-

herd showed me the way to the monastery. The hand of God was on me; it behoved me to find immediate shelter from the fury of the Greeks. I counted on your charity, on your mercy, and not in vain! but when I saw that suffering and misery had changed me so that I could not be recognized, I had not courage to tell you who I was, and I would have gone away without letting you know my name, if the Greeks who pursued me had not forced me to do so.

"In all these misfortunes, coming in so short a time, I must recognize the punishment which God inflicts upon me; I have lost my camp, my treasures. Oh! father, I am well punished!—But am I too much so? Oh no—I am too guilty, and the sufferings I endure, how many of my fellow-creatures have I made undergo them before? They have broken my heart; but I accept them with submission, if I can, by receiving them as the punishment of my crimes, efface in ever so small a degree their number and enormity."

The renegade ceased to speak; prostrate at the prior's feet, he fervently kissed his hands which he bathed with his tears. Father Marie Ange regarded him with touching tenderness; listening to the Pacha's recital his eyes were moist; the tears streamed down his venerable cheeks; it was those of charity mingling with those of repentance.

Whilst weeping over the Pacha's misfortunes, he admired the depth of the designs of Providence, who, after having brought that great criminal to repentance by so many divers degrees, had at length per-

mitted him to become so wretched only to inspire him with the deeper contrition. Like the renegade, he was astonished at the ties that were gradually established between them, and, like him, he felt that deep sympathy, the effects of which he had already seen and felt, without being able to account for it satisfactorily.

After some moments' silence he took his hands with tender affection: "You are very unhappy, my friend," said he, "but Heaven only chastises you severely here on earth to spare you frightful remorse hereafter and the eternal torments of hell. But, tell me, what do you propose to do now? You have lost a battle against the Greeks; can you not return to Salonica? Surely you are none the less Pacha of that city."

"You mean to try me, father!" answered the renegade sadly; "yes, I am still Pacha of Salonica; I can return thither, nay, I might, perchance, be able to retrieve my fortune. God has been graciously pleased to open my eyes, and, like the Prodigal Son, calls me to Himself: shall I resist His mercy? No, father! from this day forth I am again a Christian; my son is one already. We will remain Christians, and, if some years of life are still before me, I will fight amongst my brethren for the Cross of Christ. Frenchmen are fighting in the Greek ranks; I will range myself amongst them, since I am a Frenchman——"

"A Frenchman! Are *you* French?" cried Father Marie Ange, interrupting him, with an anxiety in

which hope and fear were mingled, seeking eagerly to discover in the bronzed features of the renegade, features once familiar, as though he expected a new revelation.

"Yes, I am a Frenchman; I was born in Marseilles——"

"And your father was called Desnouards; is it not so?" added the religious with increasing interest.

"Yes, that was his name,—I am Auguste Desnouards," said the renegade much amazed.

"Ah! my brother! my brother!" cried the prior in French, taking him in his arms with inexpressible joy; "I am your brother, Charles Desnouards!"

"Great God! is it possible? my brother! Yes, it is you," murmured the renegade, embracing the venerable prior with sobs. "This, then, is the sympathy, the invisible yet strong tie which bound me to you, which drew me in spite of myself——"

They were locked in each other's arms, mingling their tears and their caresses, unable to utter a word more. They remained some moments thus; then they sat down holding each other's hands. The renegade spoke first.

"My brother, my brother!" murmured he, "may I still call you by that name? I am so guilty!"

"Brother! Auguste! my friend, repentance effaces all," answered the monk with divine unction. . . . "Moreover, are we not all sinners? For all did Jesus Christ shed His blood on the cross, and, however great or enormous may be the crimes of men is

there any whose enormity exceeds the price of redemption? No, no, one single drop of the blood of the Son of God would suffice; what is it now, then, when He has shed it all entire? You return to God, my brother! there is joy in His kingdom; for He said there would be more joy in heaven for the conversion of one sinner than the perseverance of ninety-nine just. Let us rejoice when the stray sheep returns to the fold. . . . For me, brother, I am the happiest of men; happy in having found a brother whom I thought dead to God; happy that Providence, so just and so holy in its ways, has deigned to make use of me in bringing back the Prodigal Son to his father's house. Let us thank it, Auguste; let us adore its sublime decrees, and pray that it may continue the abundance of its graces to us.'

Saying these words, Father Marie Ange knelt down with his brother, and, with heartfelt fervor, both offered their thanksgivings to God. Auguste Desnouards,—as he must henceforth be called, since he has become again a Christian,—prostrate on the ground, struck his breast with fervor, confessing his sins aloud, and, with tears of grief and repentance, imploring the mercy of God. Father Marie Ange, who saw the sincerity of his contrition, brought him to the church at the time of the offices. He remained prostrate there during the prayers, whilst the monks asked for him the pardon of his crimes.

They were still in prayer, when the Father porter ran to announce to the prior that Amiranti was com

ing with some Greek chiefs, his friends, and desired to speak with him. Father Marie Ange quitted his stall; he told the Greek chiefs to follow him to the church, where there were already some other warriors of the same nation, who had been taken in and cared for after the last battle. The crimes of Selim Pacha, or rather Auguste Desnouards, had been public; he wanted, therefore, to make as public a confession of them in the church as he possibly could, and to ask pardon of all present.

Seeing him prostrate on the pavement of the church, where he had already commenced the avowal of his faults, Amiranti, who immediately recognized him, uttered a cry of surprise. The renegade continued his confession, and in such a touching way, his grief so lively and his repentance so deep, that Amiranti was the first to run to him and press him in his arms, to show him how entirely he forgot all resentment.

All present melted into tears; sobs and groans were alone heard under the ruined arches; Auguste Desnouards held the feet of his former enemy in a close embrace, and asked his forgiveness in a way that penetrated all hearts, making them admire the ways of Providence.

Father Marie Ange afterwards made himself known as his brother to all present, and the design he had of consecrating the rest of his days to the defence of the cross. All the Greeks then uttered a cry of joy and all, in turn, embraced him as their brother in

arms. To effect his entire reconciliation with heaven, the venerable prior then approached him, and gave him the absolution of his sins, announcing to him that on the morrow he might receive his Redeemer Tears sprang again to the penitent's eyes on hearing these consoling words. After the offices, all went together to share the frugal repast of the monks, blessing the Lord for the happy and singular events of that day.

In the evening, Auguste Desnouards retired to the cell of the venerable prior; and there, in the sweet familiarity of brotherly friendship, he retraced with him the tumultuous years of his youth.

"Notwithstanding all my evil inclinations and the impetuosity of my intractable disposition, think not, brother," said the penitent renegade, "that it was without a struggle I renounced the faith of our fathers. There is in the heart of the Christian, even the most audacious transgressor of the precepts of his religion, a very cruel effort to be made when there is question of adjuring his faith, publicly renouncing his God, and declaring for a worship of whose odious falsehood he is well aware."

"You remember, Charles, those sad years when I was, by my disobedience and bad conduct, a source of almost continued trouble to the family. You remember that mournful day, when my mother, on her bed of suffering, gathered us around her, some hours before she died, and said to me these words which have never been effaced from my memory: 'Auguste,

you have cost me many a tear, you have shortened my life—may the sacrifice I offer of it to God avert from you the misfortunes impending over you!—may you not expiate too dearly the errors that have caused us all so much grief! I bless you, Auguste! May the Lord vouchsafe to ratify in heaven the pardon I grant you from my heart!”

“Oh yes, Charles, this last farewell of a mother whom I loved penetrated my heart and left there an indelible impression. It was soon to be followed by that of my father, who also died forgiving me. So much kindness did not open my eyes: I tried to take possession of my share of the patrimony, and you know with what fatal ardor, in contempt of all warnings and of all counsels, I squandered the savings of our parents, and I would even have swallowed up what was left for the entire family, if they had not deemed it necessary to stop me in my criminal extravagance. Exasperated by the restraint imposed upon me, I made up my mind to leave the country and expatriate myself, without even bidding farewell to brothers and sisters who had always shown the greatest affection for me, notwithstanding my evil courses.

“My intention was to go seek my fortune in distant regions. The wars in turkey induced me to direct my course to that country. The necessity, the desire of acquiring glory and fortune, made me employ a thousand artifices to attract attention; I succeeded. I presented myself as a young French offi

cer, indignant with his country and his co-religionists; I turned my talents and acquirements to good account, and I thought myself happy when I obtained a position in the Turkish army. Alas! this was the crown of my misfortune. My ambition was strongly excited, and could only be satisfied at the cost of the greatest of crimes; it was necessary to assume the turban to trample on the cross. Fatal day! day of horror! which I would efface from my life at the cost of my blood——”

“You can do it, Auguste, by tears of repentance.”

“Oh! Charles, think not that it was without remorse your brother broke thus with heaven and his conscience. Oh no! the faith was profoundly engraved on my heart. The training of my early years had left deep roots there which all the excesses of my profligate youth had never been able to eradicate. The day before that on which I was to consummate my sacrilege, I received from the Grand Vizier a superb yataghan which I was to wear next day, and was the sign of the grade I was to obtain. In accepting it I made the engagement of apostacy.

“The last night, when, notwithstanding my guilt I had still the title of Christian, was for me the most terrible I ever spent. I vainly strove to stifle the cry of my conscience. It pursued me with the most grievous reproaches, and the most horrible threats. I saw myself the object of all men’s imprecations; the infamous word renegade was written in letters of fire on my brow. I felt that I sacrificed to my foolish

ambition more than my honor, more than my family more than my life!——”

“In a moment of overwhelming anguish, the demon of suicide entered my heart; I started to my feet, ran to the Vizier’s scimitar, seized it with a frantic hand, and prepared to avoid one crime by another no less horrible. I walked rapidly to and fro in my chamber for some time, revolving incoherent projects, and unable to come to any decision. At that moment, the remembrance of my father and mother, my mother especially, presented itself to my mind. Charles, never can I describe all the sweetness and the touching solicitude there was in the reproaches my mother seemed to address to me. I saw her on her death-bed, addressing me in the gracious words of pardon, which were for me the last legacy of her affection. I saw her with her eyes bathed in tears, her face pale and emaciated, her hands clasped on her bosom, crying in a voice of unutterable love: ‘I the mother of a renegade!—Oh! spare me that opprobrium!—And you, my son, may I still call you so?—Was it to a vile apostate that I gave birth? Was it he I fed with my milk, that I watched and cared for, and saved from so many perils?—Auguste, have pity on your mother, on the name you bear, on yourself!—Crown not my misfortunes by the basest of apostacies’——”

“I could not contain myself at such a picture and such cutting reproaches; I let the Vizier’s glittering

weapon fall from my hand, and lay down again in indescribable agitation.

"Next morning the sound of the trumpets announced to me that the moment of the fatal ceremony was approaching. The Aga of the janissaries came to inform me that it was time to appear. An hour before, they had brought me the new turban which was to defile my head. The Aga himself put it on; I hesitated to accompany him; but urged on by my evil passions, I followed him blindly, as though I were going to execution.

"When I found myself amongst the janissaries, I had to resume that martial air which I had acquired during my stay in Turkey. I drew the sabre, the token of my felony, and some moments after, the fatal act was consummated!"

Uttering these last words, Auguste Desnouards covered his face with both his hands; his bosom heaved tumultuously. "Oh, my God!" cried he at length, "how infinite is Thy mercy!—From what a frightful abyss Thou hast deigned to draw the guiltiest and most unworthy of Thy creatures!"

"From that day forth, Charles, I plunged farther into crime. I do not need to renew here the details of an iniquitous life, every hour of which was enough to fill up the measure. You know but too well how the name of Selim was execrated. Now, I have but one desire, to repair all, as far as it is possible for human will and human strength. I will live henceforth but for expiation, and I would fain shed drop

by drop, for my Divine Saviour, the blood He spared by a merciful clemency, for which I can never sufficiently thank Him."

The venerable monk took his brother's hand, Auguste had thrown himself on his knees; he raised him and pressed him to his heart: "Your repentance, Auguste, is acceptable to God. Whatsoever may be the number and malice of your iniquities, you may have confidence in His mercy. God never despised an humble, contrite heart. Our Adorable Redeemer, on the tree of the Cross, purchased the salvation of all men at the price of His blood. It is, doubtless, the prayers that have been offered up for you that have drawn upon you such unhopèd-for grace. I remember, as though it were but yesterday, the effect produced on us by the news of your disappearance from Marseilles. Notwithstanding all the grief you caused us, you know what affection we all bore you. We thought at first that your absence would not be of long duration; and when several weeks had passed, we hoped to receive a letter from you, to tell us what your intentions were, and to what country you had gone. Our brother Henri and our two sisters, who were all three models of virtue and piety, ceased not, thenceforward, to intercede for you with God, endeavoring to draw down on their unhappy brother the blessings of heaven, by their prayers and their good works.

"For you, my dear Auguste, I nourished in my heart a design, the execution of which I was obliged to

postpone to a future time. As the eldest of the family, I had a duty to discharge to my brothers and sisters, and I could not think of myself till after I had provided for their establishment. Two years passed away, yet joy was as far as ever from the family. Your absence paralyzed all the elements of happiness which the spirit of peace and concord had gathered around us. Our friends sought in vain to console us, or, at least, to put an end to our anxiety, wishing to persuade us of your death. We could not take that event as a consolation, and, besides, we still cherished the hope that you yet lived, and that we should one day see you again.

“Several years passed thus. Henri, whose health had always been feeble, died praying for you. The eldest of our sisters, Amelie, had formed the project of consecrating herself to the Lord. She did so in the Order of Carmelites, which she chose on account of its austerities, still with the intention of offering her sacrifice for the salvation of a lost brother. Our younger sister married the son of an old friend of our parents, and became an excellent wife and mother. I was now free, and thought the moment favorable for following the vocation to which I thought God had long called me. I must also tell you, my dear Auguste, your memory was present to my mind, when I pronounced the solemn vows that were to bind me for life to the Lord. A hope for which I could not then account sprang up in my mind at the moment when I assumed the holy habit

of our order. Years could not efface your memory from my heart ; it seemed, on the contrary, that your prolonged absence did but make it the more vivid. As the eldest of the family, I considered myself charged with paternal responsibility in your regard ; God knows how many inquiries and researches of all kinds I had made after you. So, when the moment came of realizing the project I had long formed, I united myself to the sacrifice of our parents, Henri, and our sister, and offered to God my entire consecration to His service on behalf of a guilty brother for whom my heart still cherished the fondest affection.

“ Ah ! my dear Auguste, you could never imagine what my happiness was when I belonged irrevocably to God ; the grievous anxiety which had till then tortured my soul was calmed ; I loved you none the less ; and I prayed more. The bitterness of my grief gave place to a confidence in the divine goodness, for which I could by no means account. I was charged by the order of my superiors with various missions which took me away from my own country. I was sent into Spain, into Italy, and finally made one of a little colony of religious of those two nations, that were sent into Greece. Events which are not unknown to you placed us in possession of the ruins of St. George's Convent. There we consecrated ourselves, as you know, to the service of the altar and the relief of our brethren. In defending Amiranti against your fury, I felt myself animated by a more than common ardor I had heard much of Selim

Pacha; the account of his exploits and his crimes had deeply interested me; and when I learned that that famous Mussulman was a renegade, that he had been a Christian like us and brought up in the true faith, I felt springing up within me a lively compassion for that great criminal, an ardent desire to know him, and, I will even admit, a powerful inclination to make some attempts on that brazen heart, which it seemed to me was not wholly closed to feeling or to remorse. The sight of you amid arms and warriors could not shake my resolution. An interior voice told me that it was not without a purpose God had sent the Pacha to St George's. Oh! that day, Auguste, I prayed very fervently for the ferocious Selim, whom I never suspected to be my brother. Your threats, your bad treatment did not frighten me. One thought filled my soul, and it was that of the conversion of the great criminal I had before me.

"Oh! blessed a thousand times be the Divine Providence which so admirably directs all events by its adorable decrees! Blessed forever be the heavenly goodness which has again united brother to brother in the same faith, the same hope, and the same charity!"

After these words, fervently pronounced, the venerable prior fell on his knees and remained some time prostrate, returning thanks to God for the inestimable favors bestowed on him and his.

"Brother," said Auguste, "you must know that I mean to consecrate my whole remaining life to the

God I have so outraged. You will direct me, you will make known to me the new way in which I am to walk. Like a docile child I will follow your advice in all things. I will regard your counsels as orders from heaven. I know it was the prayers of holy souls offered as holocausts for me that turned aside the wrath of God from me and drew down upon me such signal mercies. Oh, Charles; Oh, my beloved brother; Oh, my father, my mother, my Henri, my worthy sisters, henceforth I will, I hope, show myself worthy of belonging to you!"

"Yes, my dear Auguste, God, who has commenced His work, will bring it to perfection. Opportunities of repairing and expiating will not be wanting to you. If you are to remain clothed in the warrior's armor, it may cover the sackcloth of the penitent. If, for the honor of the Cross, you fight in the ranks of its zealous defenders, you will be chary of human blood, you will expose your own life, and be as careful as possible of the lives of your brethren. Henceforth united, never more to separate, I will uplift my hands to heaven for you, whilst you consecrate your valor and your arm to the defence of these unhappy countries."

To strangers, to travellers journeying in Greece, now happily delivered from the Turkish yoke, there is shown, some leagues from the ruins of Missolonghi, a mound raised on a mountain, whence may be seen a

beautiful country, and beyond, the foamy waves of the Gulf of Lepanto. This mound is covered with several large stones, but none of them bears any inscription, although it is a tomb. Under these stones are said to rest two men whose memory is still revered amongst the Greeks and the people of those mountains. The Klephtes and the Palicares celebrate their fine actions in their songs and ballads: "They were brothers; one was a priest, and, in the name of Jesus Christ, succored the wounded on the battle-field and the sick in their dwellings; the other was a warrior, who, from a ferocious Mussulman, became one of the most pious and illustrious defenders of the Cross. Both died on the same day," adds the ballad: "the warrior fell in a combat against the Turks, under the walls of Missolonghi; the other fell caring some victims of pestilence in a neighboring village. The Greek chiefs honored their memory, giving the same tomb to the priest and the warrior. All the country wept them, and, although their names have perished in the ruins of Missolonghi, their memory shall ever live in the songs and the memories of the people.



DE FROMENTAL;

AN EPISODE OF THE WARS
IN THE EAST,

UNDER THE REIGN OF TERROR IN FRANCE

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DE FROMENTAL;

AN EPISODE OF THE WARS OF THE EAST

UNDER THE REIGN OF TERROR IN FRANCE

CHAPTER I.

IF we are to believe an official dispatch written from Alençon in 1793 to the minister of war by citizen Moynault, commander of the forces, the mission with which the Committee of Public Safety had entrusted the conventional Garnier de Saintes was one of no small difficulty. It related to the organizing, in the department of the Sarthe, of the revolutionary government such as it had been decreed on the 10th of October;—"And," said Moynault in the declamatory language of the period, "Garnier will have trouble enough to find men to fill the vacant forts for the departments of Orne, Mayenne and Sarthe, are infested by fanaticism, aristocracy, and federalism."

Although it was in fact very true that the greater portion of the inhabitants of Mans were at heart attached to the ancient *regime*, it must nevertheless be allowed that the Revolution possessed at Mans, as

in other towns of France, some zealous partizans, not alone among those who, without any fixed opinion of their own, are ever eager to build their private fortunes upon the ruins of the general prosperity, but even among men of honest principle who were either seduced by the high sounding words "fraternity" and "liberty," or carried away, unconsciously almost, by that paltry vanity which leads certain minds to envy the privileges of the higher classes.

Among the latter of these was an old bachelor named Chevert, who with his sister, a portly old spinster already past the meridian of life, inhabited a little dwelling in the Rue Basse.

They had inherited from their father, who carried on the business of a hosier in the Rue Petit-Pont-Neuf, a fortune of fifty thousand francs, scraped together by the daily profits of his trade; but not content to enjoy this little treasure in peace, the brother and sister had given themselves up to projects of ambition which occupied their minds, to the absorption of every other idea. Mdlle. Petronille Chevert, brought up at school with young ladies of noble birth, among them, but not of them, had vainly dreamed of raising herself to an equality with them, and at fifteen years of age had registered a vow never to marry any one but a gentleman; in consequence of which resolution, she was still single at fifty, no one, suitable in her esteem, having as yet sought her hand, which unpardonable neglect had at length caused her to conceive an aversion for the higher classes altogether

As for Chevert, the hobby which he complacently bestrode,—his most ardent desire in short,—was to achieve the signal honor of being raised to the dignity of sheriff in his native city, which would at once have conferred upon him a position in the world, and the precious privilege of encircling his waist with a silken scarf trimmed with gold fringe. But he had experienced numberless disappointments: he had had the pain and mortification of seeing Barbet des Granges and Pousset de la Voye preferred before him, and some years later the Advocate Delauney, till he had at length come to entertain profound disgust for a government which had been unable to recognize his merits, and he was therefore prepared to hail with enthusiasm the “rising sun of justice and liberty,”—for thus he designated the decree of the assembly which renewed the establishment of the municipal administrations. His wounded ambition was still more revived when Garnier de Saintes seemed to have taken him into his friendly confidence, and even honored him at times with a fraternal pressure of the hand. Thus it was that the citizen Chevert passed for a zealous patriot when the report reached Mans that the Vendéans, after having seized upon Beauge and La Fleche, had put to the route a body of fifteen or sixteen thousand men whom Gen. Chabot had sent against them under Chapelain-Renaudin, leader of the National Guard.

This news, confirmed by numerous fugitives, had already caused the utmost alarm in the minds of

citizen Chevert and his worthy sister, as well as in those of the civil and military authorities, when on the 10th of December, at nine o'clock in the morning, Mdlle. Petronille, while still at her toilet, saw her chamber door rudely burst open, and a man precipitate himself into her presence without the smallest explanation.

Shocked by the intruder's utter disregard of propriety, her first movement was a gesture of anger; but recognizing her own brother in the pale and disordered personage who had thrown himself into an arm chair, and picturing to herself moreover that some great misfortune must have befallen them, her anger cooled, and forgetting the words of reproach which had risen to her lips, she ran to him hastily, and seizing his hand exclaimed:

"In the name of heaven, what has happened to you?"

"We are lost!" murmured citizen Chevert, who could with difficulty pronounce a word, "the brigands are advancing rapidly, and by this evening perhaps will be masters of the town."

"Are you quite sure of what you say?" demanded poor Petronille, growing pale in her turn.

"I am only too sure of it, since I heard the sad news from Garnier de Saintes himself, who came this moment to tell me; and as unfortunately our political opinions are but too well known to our neighbors, we have everything to fear from the *Whites*, if they should enter the town as conquerors."

"We must fly, my brother, we must set out this very instant."

"All very easy to say, Petronille, but where are we to fly to?"

"To Ballon, to the house of our cousin Grillot. We have, it is true, rather neglected him since the death of our father, because it was not very pleasant to have a shoemaker for a relation; but now that we have a popular government, good republicans like ourselves should not look so closely into such things; he will be flattered by our visit, and readily accord us hospitality if only in the hope of being remembered in our will."

"But how can we thus abandon all we possess to the rapacity of these brigands?"

"Life is dearer than riches," replied Mdlle. Petronille, who found a ready answer to every objection; "besides we will carry away the greater part of our valuables."

Chevert suffered himself to be persuaded by this argument, and they set to work in haste to collect their money, papers, and jewels.

Already had their drawers been stripped of their contents, when a violent knocking was heard at the door; the servant hastened to open it, and a man, armed with a gun, entered the house.

"Look alive, neighbor," cried he in a loud voice, even before entering the chamber, "hast thou not heard the drum beat to arms? The National Guard is assembling everywhere to fly to the succor of the

country in danger ; I have called for thee as I passed better off than many others—we have guns and pistols ; arm thyself and come !”

“ Hang the busy meddler !” thought Chevert, whose face was blanched with terror. “ I do not feel altogether well to-day,” said he aloud. “ I feel certain symptoms of the colic, and my sister was just persuading me to take some physic.”

“ It is a pretty time to talk of the colic, and taking physic, when the enemy is at the very gates ! Do you not perceive that it is a mere woman’s subterfuge to detain you ? My wife, too, would fain have dissuaded me from taking up arms, but I sent her off and here I am. Zounds ! it is something to be a patriot in these days, and for my part I do not wish to see my native city given up to fire and sword, my house plundered, and my property destroyed.”

“ Oh ! Heaven ! citizen Boursel, do you really think us in such danger as all that ?” cried Petronille, changing color.

“ That, and many other dangers beside. They say the rascals are frantic with rage since their habitations have been burnt down.”

“ Heaven grant that they may not do the same by ours !”

“ It is very likely to happen though.”

“ But ought not the Government to protect us ! Of what use are the troops of the Republic ?”

“ Just imagine, citizeness, that we have here at this moment only about a couple of hundred hussars, the

remains of the battalion of Vincennes, and a battalion of young recruits who have never smelt powder; all this is quite insufficient for our protection, if the good patriots do not come to the succor as it is their bounden duty to do. Come, Chevert, art thou nearly ready? Thy hesitation, man, inspires me with but a poor idea of thy patriotism."

"One may be a good republican and yet have the colic," replied Chevert with a sullen air.

"Hum! I very much doubt whether the citizen representative will be of the same opinion," growled the terrible neighbor; "but I have already lost too much time in vain discourse; once more, wilt thou come?" yes, or no?"

"I shall follow thee, of course," replied Chevert reflecting that formal refusal might perhaps cost him his life, or at all events hinder him from obtaining the honor to which he had so long aspired. "Besides this hateful man will not keep me always in his sight," said he to himself in an under tone, "and I shall no doubt be able to find some means of escaping before the fighting begins."

Whilst making these heroic reflections, citizen Chevert was busily engaged in cleaning his gun, arming himself with his pistols and attaching to his girdle an old rusty sword.

"Forward!" cried he at length in a resolute tone, as though this warlike apparel had suddenly inspired him with some degree of bravery.

"What! would you leave me all alone! a poor

defenceless woman!" cried Petronille, half fainting.

"Keep quiet, you goose, I shall not be long before I am back," whispered Chevert in her ear, pretending all the while to embrace her as though to bid her a last adieu; "have Cocotte ready harnessed to the cart, and be prepared to set out at the first signal."

And with these words he followed his dreaded neighbor with a firm step.

The first care of Mdle. Petronille, after the departure of the two National Guards, was to go down to the stable and order Cocotte to be supplied with a good feed of oats; but judge of her grief when she learned from one of her servants, who was as terrified as herself, that under the pretext of requiring him for the "public service," two agents of the police had just been to fetch the poor beast, and had taken him unceremoniously away, together with the vehicle upon which the brother and sister had founded their hopes of safety. Citizeness Petronille no sooner heard these dismal tidings, than she carefully barricaded all the doors and windows, concealed in her palliasse the greater part of the things which she had at first resolved to carry away—then, at her wit's end, having exhausted all her resources, and no longer knowing what to think on the score of her own personal safety, she seated herself in her arm chair, and calling her two servants to aid her as a body-guard, awaited in silence the course of events.

CHAPTER II.

As citizen Boursel had truly said, four or five thousand were found but a small body for the defence of such a town as Le Mans; but remembering that a decree of the Convention condemned every city which did not offer resistance to the royalists to be razed to the ground, Garnier de Saintes and General Chabot resolved to take immediate steps for checking the progress of the enemy.

The town of Le Mans, built in the form of an amphitheatre, on the left bank of the Sarthe, a little above the confluence of that river, with the Huisne, contained at the period of our story from nineteen to twenty thousand souls, and though not so extensive as at the present day, it covered nevertheless a good space of ground. In the centre of the town stood and still stands the Place des Halles, to which most of the streets converge. The Rue Basse, in which the house of citizeness Chevert was, led in one direction to this Place des Halles, by the street of the Minimés, and on the other by the cross-road of the Mission to the town of Pontlieue, on the road to La Fleche, by which the Royalist army was advancing. General Chabot ordered a redoubt, armed with four pieces of cannon, to be thrown up first beyond this

latter town; another redoubt furnished with *chevaux de frise*, planks thickly studded with nails, and other implements of warfare, was erected at the foot of the bridge and a hundred feet off, a piece of cannon worked by artillerymen defended the pass of the Mission

At the same time two arches of the old bridge of Pontlieue were hastily broken down to avoid the responsibility of defending it; the trees by the Abbey of Epau were felled to supply that place with temporary fortifications, and at Gue de Maulny two guns were placed, together with a handful of soldiers of the battalion of Vincennes, twenty-five hussars, and several companies of recruits from the district of Ferte.

About two o'clock in the afternoon the Vendéans appeared, and attacked the first redoubt with such impetuosity, that it was carried in less than a quarter of an hour. They then turned their charge full upon the main defences, whilst the recruits who formed the outposts, driven in and pursued sword in hand, retreated in disorder upon Pontlieue; here they were met by the Republican hussars who drove the unfortunate men back with their swords in order to force them to an engagement with the enemy, But the greater part of them plunged into the river, all cold and swollen as it was with the rains, rather than encounter the formidable adversary whose impetuous ardor overthrew all obstacles. In vain did citizen Desmerres, who commanded the city artillery, send

his grape-shot like hail among this brave troop of heroes ; the Vendéans, scarcely arrested a moment by this murderous discharge, rushed like infuriated lions upon the second redoubt ; the hussars, terrified in their turn, fled in disorder, the foot soldiers laid down their arms and escaped, some into the town, others into the country ; the veterans who guarded Epau surrendered at the first summons ; the troops of the Gue de Maulny beat a hasty retreat by the way of the Greffier, before even they were attacked, and at three in the afternoon the triumphant army made its entry into the capital of Maine, which General Chabot, Garnier de Saintes and all the Republican authorities had prudently evacuated, carrying with them the money of the public coffers, and part of the registers of the administration.

In the meantime Mdlle, Petronille, more dead than alive, awaited in unspeakable terror, which the sound of the cannon and incessant firing augmented every moment, the denouement of the drama, which was acting almost beneath her window.

“What will become of us?” cried she starting at every fresh explosion ; “and my brother not yet returned ! Heaven grant no harm has befallen him !”

“My opinion, Mademoiselle, is that the best thing we can do is to say our prayers,” said the elder of the two servants, proceeding to kneel down in a corner of the room, with her chaplet in her hand.

Her companion followed her example. As for citizeness Chevert, since she had embraced republican

principles with ardor, she had somewhat relaxed from the pious instructions of the good ladies by whom she had been educated, but in this critical moment, terror and alarm leading her instinctively back to the habits of her youth, she began to repeat mechanically the Litanies of the Blessed Virgin, intermingling each ejaculation with some more mundane entreaties. The whole formed a curious jumble of the sacred and the profane.

Meantime the sound of voices and of footsteps, like the roaring of the waves of the sea, was heard in the street.

“What is the matter now?” cried she—and curiosity surmounting her fear, she half opened the window gently, and ventured to take a peep through the blinds. A strange spectacle presented itself to her view; she perceived an immense crowd of men, of women, of children, and of old men, walking on pell-mell, some with arms, others carrying all they had most precious upon their backs: it was like the departure of the children of Israel out of Egypt. This was the Vendean army defiling through the Rue Basse in order to gain the Place des Halles and then disperse themselves over the town and seek that repose which a long and tedious march and perilous conflicts had rendered indispensable. This army, composed of more than sixty thousand souls, scarcely counted twenty-five thousand combatants. The brave fellows had no uniform, but the greater part of them wore the white cockade. The leaders were almost all at

tired in a round *vest* and chamois pantaloons; they wore hats of the time of Henri Quatre ornamented with white rosettes, and in some cases with the lily embroidered in gold. A scarf or white girdle formed the distinctive mark of the superior officers; their solitary flag white and embroidered with the fleurs-de-lis. The cavalry were not distinguished from the foot soldiers by any uniform, but the first who could obtain possession of an enemy's horse, mounted it, and became a horse soldier immediately.

The procession lasted more than three hours, so great was the multitude of these poor people whom fire and sword had driven from their homes.

Mdlle. Petronille had not examined very narrowly into all this, for no sooner did she perceive the white cockades of the Vendean soldiers, than she retreated hastily from the window, and with an affrighted air, took several turns round her chamber, as though seeking a place of refuge, all the while exclaiming in a doleful tone :

“ Brother ! Brother ! have you then abandoned me ? ”

She then sank into a chair pale and motionless as a statue. A rude knock at the street door soon shook the whole house. Petronille sprung from her seat, and would fain have forbidden the door to be opened, but the words died upon her lips, and she again sank back upon her seat. She heard the servants withdrawing the bolts, then a manly and sonorous voice, in no way resembling that of Chevert, resound-

ed through the passage, and numerous steps were heard ascending the staircase. In a moment all the evils with which the citizen Boursel had recently threatened his trembling neighbor, presented themselves to the imagination of Petronille, and thinking the time for some dreadful catastrophe had arrived, she ended by falling into a dead faint.



CHAPTER III.

WHEN Mdlle. Petronille had recovered her senses, her astonishment was extreme on seeing herself surrounded by three graceful young girls, who were supporting her with the tenderest compassion, whilst a lady of more mature age held a smelling bottle of rock crystal to her nose.

"Thank Heaven she is coming to herself," said the silvery voice of the prettiest of these young girls.

"How do you find yourself now?" asked the stranger lady, whose countenance was a mixture of gentleness and dignity.

"Better, much better," replied Petronille, recovering her speech.

Then casting looks of terror around :

"Where am I?" said she, "and who are you?"

"Poor exiles, who crave your hospitality for a few days."

"You !" Vendéans ! oh that cannot be."

In fact nothing less resembled the ideal portrait which Mdlle. Petronille had drawn of those whom she in common with others designated as *brigands*, than the four charming beings who were surrounding her with their cares and attentions.

Mme. Boguais, as the elder lady of the party was

named, was a woman of about thirty-six or forty years of age. Grief and anxiety had somewhat deadened the freshness of her complexion, and sharpened the outlines of her gentle features, but she still possessed a noble and distinguished air; as for her daughters, a poet of the period would not have failed to compare them to the three graces, and their charms and beauty would hardly have rendered the comparison an exaggerated one. Rosalie, the eldest, was about twenty; Eulalie, the next, scarcely eighteen; and Celeste, the youngest of the three, but fifteen. They might have been likened, on seeing them gracefully grouped around their mother, to three half-opened rose buds surrounding a full blown rose which had bent beneath the storm.

"Calm yourself, Madame," said Rosalie, scarcely able to help smiling at the terror depicted in the countenance of Petronille, "the *brigands* will not do you any harm."

"You will be answerable for them, my charming young lady, will you not? But now speak—command—all that I possess is at your service."

"We only ask for beds to rest in, for my poor daughters and I stand in great need of repose," said the mother, "and a little refreshment, for which we will willingly repay you."

"Do not mention that," replied Petronille, charmed with the moderation of her beautiful guests, and trusting that their presence would be a protection to her from the dangers she so much dreaded: "I am

only too happy to place myself wholly at the service of noble ladies like you. Here, Jeanneton, Françoise, lay the table, bring some of the oldest wine, and prepare everything that we have of the best !”

Whilst Petronille was engaged in making preparations for the comfort of the strangers, the latter dried their garments, which were saturated with rain, at the fire, and warmed their benumbed limbs.

“Poor dear children, how tired you must be,” said the mother.

“Not as much as you, mamma,” replied Rosalie, “for we are more accustomed to walking. How fortunate it was, too, that our uncle succeeded in procuring a carriage for us ; but for this I do not know how you would ever have performed such a journey on foot !”

“We would have made a sedan chair for you with our hands,” said Eulalie.

Mme. Boguais smiled sorrowfully.

“It was enough for you to carry yourselves, young and weak as you are,” said she.

“Oh ! mamma, you forget what strength filial affection bestows !”

The poor mother looked at her children with eyes streaming with tears, and opening her arms to the young girls who rushed simultaneously into them, she pressed them fervently to her heart.

Almost at the same instant a man with grey hair, wearing the white scarf of the Vendean officers, and

the cross of St. Louis at his button-hole, appeared at the threshold of the door.

"Well! how do you get on here?" said he in that deep voice which had so strongly excited the apprehension of Mdle. Petronille an hour before.

"Come and warm yourself, my dear uncle," cried Rosalie, "it is so comfortable in this room."

"What are they doing now, and is there any news?" asked Mme. Boguais eagerly.

"Every one has endeavored to instal themselves as well as they could, some in one quarter, some in another," said the chevalier, seating himself by the fire; "in some of the houses sixty of our fellows have billeted themselves together."

"And have any precautions been taken for the safety of the army?"

"Bah! all the men in the town have taken to flight, and nothing is to be met with but women and children."

"Yes! but the army of Westerman, which is always upon our heels! They should, at all events, have organized guards to support and relieve the sentinels."

"You talk like a consummate general, my fair cousin; but how make the necessity of these wise measures understood by poor peasants, so overwhelmed with fatigue that they can think of nothing but obtaining a little rest? They have performed prodigies of valor to-day,—they will do as much to-morrow, if need be,—but no human power would

keep them on duty in a guard-house while they can eat and sleep tranquilly in the houses of the town."

"And for this unpardonable carelessness, we may perhaps be all surprised and massacred in the night."

"What would you have, my dear cousin? the generals are powerless to help it."

"Then, Heaven protect and guard us! And if it enters into the mysterious designs of God to let our holy cause be overthrown, may He take pity on our souls, and grant us in heaven that repose which we shall probably never more taste on earth! For, shall I confess to you, all hope of success seems to abandon me at last! I see misfortune enclosing us on all sides. We are in a circle, out of which we cannot pass, and which presses us closer and closer within its limits, and we cannot fail sooner or later to be ground to powder."

"The moment when we have just rendered ourselves masters, almost without a blow struck, of a large and beautiful town, in which we find abundance of provisions, is a strange one to choose for making such reflections!"

"Divine Providence can doubtless direct the course of events, so as to baffle all human foresight; but, according to all probability, whither can this conquest, precious as it seems at the present moment, lead us? Do you think the republicans will have us long at peace in this asylum? The easier this town, open on all sides, has been to take, the more easily shall we be driven hence by a superior force. What

will then become of us, decimated as we are by sickness, with no place strong enough to shelter us, and give our soldiers time to recover from their fatigues, with no fixed plan, and without any communication with the royalists of the other provinces?"

"Well, mamma, we will die like martyrs, if we cannot live like faithful subjects!" exclaimed Eulalie

"All very fine talking, niece," said the chevalier, while the poor mother fixed upon her children eyes which seemed to say:

"It is on your account alone that I fear sufferings, danger, and death!"

"Besides," continued the chevalier, "with men like ours we may expect impossibilities, for prodigies are familiar to them. Only imagine, for instance, just now, at the attack on Pontlieue, one of our soldiers rushed in pursuit of about thirty republicans who were flying towards the woods of Fune; he shot five, and brought back seven others whom he had succeeded in capturing."*

"Wonderful, indeed!" cried mother and daughters in a breath, while their gentle faces beamed with enthusiasm.

"And you have not heard either of the splendid

* This extraordinary fact is cited in the report of the Société des Arts. The seven republicans who were made prisoners paid their ransom to the royalist soldier with sundry bottles of wine, which he made them quaff with him to the health of Louis the 17th

combat of that noble Prince de Talmont, whom my little Celeste admired so much the other day?"

"What has he done, now?" asked the three sisters.

"This morning as we were quitting La Fleche, closely followed by Westerman, who pitilessly massacred every straggler he could lay hands on, the prince, at the head of a party of his cavalry, was riding in the rear of the army to protect its retreat, when a republican hussar, who recognized him by his white scarf, dared to challenge him at a distance with the point of his sabre. In a moment De Talmont detached himself from his troop; 'I am with thee,' cried he to the hussar, and immediately a singular combat worthy of the best age of chivalry commenced. The cavalry of both parties remained motionless with eyes strained, watching the two champions whose swords crossed each other furiously. The weapons sparkled; even the coursers, sharing the animosity of their masters, neighed and strove to bite each other. One of them did not obey quickly enough the behest of his rider—it was that of De Talmont—who was slightly wounded; but almost immediately with a vigorous stroke of the sabre, he felled his adversary's horse to the earth, and with a second blow, equally well directed, cleft his rider's head to the very shoulder blade."

"Oh! how dreadful!" said Celeste.

"On the contrary, magnificent!" replied the old chevalier, "and I assure you both royalists and re-

publicans mingled their plaudits and shouts of admiration at this brilliant passage of arms."

At this moment, Mdlle. Petronille re-entered the apartment, and Mme. Boguais presented her cousin with that grace that distinguished all her actions, and the old royalist saluted his hostess less like a proud conqueror than as a courteous knight, who prides himself on showing respect to ladies of all parties.

"Supper is ready," said Petronille, making a profound obeisance; "have the kindness to follow me into the dining-room."

"Good news for famished creatures like us," replied the chevalier, "but I hope, Madame, that you will be good enough to render this repast still more agreeable by doing the honors of the table yourself," added he, offering her his hand.

"Oh!" murmured the elderly lady, enchanted with so much courtesy, and slyly casting a scrutinizing glance on the still fresh countenance of the chevalier, and at the cross of St. Louis which glittered at his button-hole. "This brigand," thought she, "is more polite and amiable than all our *sans-culottes* put together. He is very good-looking, too, and cannot be much older than myself."

And, perhaps, the hopes and dreams of her youth were about to revive in her bosom, when all at once the recollection of Chevert, absent since the morning, recurred to her mind.

Though vain, selfish, and cowardly, Mdlle. Petronille had, nevertheless, a very sincere attachment to

her brother, and the desire of hearing of him, and of rescuing him, perhaps from some great danger, overcoming every other feeling, she threw herself with all her might at the feet of the royalist, assuring him with tears in her eyes that she would never sit at table, and would remain in her present humble posture until she had obtained the pardon of Chevert who had been forced much against his will to take up arms against the Vendéans, and who was in all probability made prisoner, even supposing no greater harm had befallen him.

"Be calm, Madame," answered the chevalier, employing all the force of his muscular arm to raise her; "if your brother is our prisoner, I will undertake to restore him to you speedily."

And forgetting the hunger and fatigue with which he must have been overpowered, the excellent man quitted the house in an instant, spite of the cold and continued rain, and returned in two hours accompanied by citizen Chevert, half dead with fright, and astonished at finding himself once more safe and sound beneath his own roof.



CHAPTER IV.

ON the morrow, at daybreak, the Vendean leaders wearing their Henri Quatre hats, and decorated with the white scarf, the distinctive mark of command, visited every part of the town, and were only too well convinced of the impossibility of defending it against the numerous troops now in hot pursuit of them. The best thing to be thought of, therefore, was to abandon as soon as possible this brilliant but useless conquest, and again set in motion, cold and rainy as was the weather, those poor creatures worn out with fatigue and privation, and to whom repose would have been as acceptable as it was really necessary.

The council, presided over by the Bishop of Agra, assembled that very day at the Hotel de la Biche in the Place des Halles; they had a long and anxious discussion upon the road which it would be most desirable for them to take; the Prince de Talmont was for marching direct upon Paris, in the hope of swelling the royalist army by the numerous partisans they might expect to meet with in the plains of La Beance; Henri de La Rochejacquelin, on the contrary, thought it more advisable to recross the Loire, and conduct the Vendéans back to their dear Bocage,

the scene of their first exploits. They separated without coming to a conclusion; night arrived;—night peaceable enough to the unthinking multitude, reckless of the future, and delightedly enjoying the comforts of which they had so long been deprived, but full of anxiety for the leaders of the army, who, while they knew the imminence of the peril, knew not at the same time what steps to take to ward it off.

The next day, Thursday, the 12th of December, the Vendean officers issued orders for the horses to be saddled, and every one to be in readiness to start at the first signal; but about eleven in the morning, the hussars composing the vanguard of Westerman's army suddenly appeared on the heights of Pontlieue.

Then the cry "To arms! to arms! the enemy!" re-echoed throughout the city; the most intrepid soldiers, to the number of about three thousand, under the command of La Rochejacquelin, assembled in haste, and taking their muskets in one hand and their chaplets in the other, advanced in close order against the redoubtable army of Mayence and proudly awaited it in the open country. The combat soon commenced; the shock of the Vendéans was so terrible that the Mayençais recoiled and fled in disorder, some by the way of Luce and Saint Calais, the others into the fields and open commons. The royalist peasants casting away their sabots pursued the fugitives with incredible ardor, imprudently leaving their guns nearly a league behind them; but at that moment a column of the division of Marceau, sent to the

relief of the main body, encountered the Vendean dispersed along the road, and suddenly attacking them, forced them to turn and fall back upon Le Mans. In vain did the Vendean leaders endeavor to defend the redoubt established at Pontlieue; neither prayers nor threats sufficed to check the headlong course of the peasants; the enemy pursued them in close columns to the entrance of the town, where they found barricades hastily erected by the Prince de Talmont, who, at the head of his own followers, vigorously repulsed the troops of Westerman. During this time, La Rochejacquelin, returning at full gallop into Le Mans, did all in his power to collect the scattered Vendean and lead them on to the attack. The greater part having lost by bodily suffering every feeling save the instinct of self preservation, had eaten and drunk with a voracity increased by several weeks of scarcity and privation, and now lay extended on the Place des Halles, sleeping so heavily that it was found impossible to arouse them.

La Rochejacquelin, his heart sinking with despair, could with difficulty assemble twelve thousand men in a state to bear arms. At the head of this brave troop, he advanced against an enemy possessing far greater numbers. They fought furiously in the streets of the town, the battery of the wall of Quatre-Basse being taken and retaken several times. The Vendean occupied the houses, and fired from the windows upon the assailants, while by order of the general-in chief, the officer commanding the artillery di-

rected his cannon against the streets leading out of the Place des Halles.

Towards midnight, both parties, worn out with fatigue, suspended the action, as though by mutual consent; but the booming of the cannon which continued to resound at intervals, seemed to proclaim at each moment that the combat was not over, and that the morrow's sun would rise again on all the horrors of war. In short, no sooner had day begun to dawn than the republicans, reinforced by thirty thousand men of Kleber's army who had arrived during the night, advanced to the charge under fire of the royalists, who had maintained their positions, and at seven in the morning arrived at the Place des Halles, by the adjacent streets. Then began the most horrible butchery that can be imagined; the streets literally flowed with blood, and the cries of the dying mingled with the shouts of victory. In vain did the royalist leaders strive to organize the retreat which had now become indispensable. Their voices were lost in the appalling tumult; the *Whites* fled in disorder by the back streets leading upon the Place des Halles to the Place de l'Eperon, in order to gain the bridge of La Sarthe and the road to Laval.

Like all the rest of the poor Vendean women, who had not even the excitement caused by the smell of the powder and the heat of the combat to divert their minds from their own misfortunes, Madame Boguais and her daughters had spent in the intensest anguish

this dreadful day and yet more dreadful night of Thursday.

The old chevalier of St. Louis, brave and loyal like all the rest of these ancient *noblesse* of which he formed an honorable member, had flown at the first cry of alarm to the side of the Prince de Talmont, and since then his cousin and terrified nieces had vainly expected his return.

The affliction was general in the house of Chevert, Mdlle. Petronille shared nearly all the anxiety of the Boguais family. To the uneasiness caused her by the lively interest with which the chevalier had from the first inspired her, were now added the unspeakable torments of a fear still greater even than that which she had experienced at the first alarm of the approach of the Vendéans. It seemed to her as though she had not appreciated the humanity and moderation of the royalist soldiers, that it was madness on her part even to have doubted their triumph, but that the danger would in reality commence when the republicans should be masters of the town, for they would doubtless consider it a crime in the people of Le Mans to have afforded shelter to the *Whites*. So that in spite of every good possible feeling towards her guests, Mdlle. Chevert yet made no effort to detain them, when these unhappy females, a prey to the dreadful perplexity, announced their intention of quitting the abode which had served them as a temporary refuge, and following the shattered remains of their army.

"I shall be happy to keep you longer with me," said the old lady, "but neither your lives nor mine would be safe if you were found here; you had much better quit the town with your friends than remain at the mercy of the republicans. When you meet the chevalier again, if he is still in this world," added she with a profound sigh, "make my best compliments and beg him to come and see me when the times are more tranquil. As the preserver of my brother, I shall always be delighted to see him."

So saying, she conducted them with eager haste to the street door, which she then immediately locked.

The poor women were hardly in the street when they perceived at some paces distant a mother and a daughter, Madame Gourreau, and Madame de la Fouchere, two of their royalist friends, who had been driven from the house in which they had taken shelter. All these unhappy fugitives flew to each other, embraced, and without uttering a word began to reascend the Rue Basse, walking at random in the hope of meeting with royalists whom they knew, and whose protection they could claim. They were wandering thus at hazard beneath a heavy rain of icy coldness, but which was yet not copious enough to obliterate the traces of blood which they encountered at each step, when they found themselves surrounded by a troop of republicans, emerging from the place de Quatre Rous. The poor women felt their hearts congealed with terror; in vain would they have quickened their steps to escape the fangs of this brutal

soldiery, drunk with wine and carnage, but their trembling limbs refused their office.

"*Brigandes!* and pretty ones, too!" said a soldier with a wine-inflamed countenance, seizing Eulalie with his great hand stained with blood and powder, whilst one of his comrades, not less hideous than himself, passed his arm audaciously round the slender waist of Celeste.

The young girls uttered shrieks of terror, and struggled vehemently in the grasp of the ruffians, while Mme. Boguais, like that weak and timorous bird which suddenly receives from its maternal instincts incredible power to defend its young ones, threw herself furiously upon the cowardly assailants.

"Wretches!" cried she, repulsing them with all her strength, "kill them, if you will, but do not insult them!"

And as they still retained their hold of their prizes:

"Have you, then, neither mothers nor sisters, the memory of whom should bring the blush of shame to your cheeks?" added she, her whole frame shaken with convulsive sobs.

But the monsters, laughing at her despair, were on the point of seizing Madame Boguais herself when an officer, suddenly making his appearance on the scene, rode into the middle of the group, and with a loud voice:

"Stop!" cried he, drawing his sword, "the first who touches them shall answer to me."

"They are *brigandes*," replied one of the soldiers.

"What of that," answered the officer, "it is for the tribunal to judge them and to condemn them if they are guilty, but it would be unworthy of brave men like you to offer insult to defenceless women."

And as deep murmurs began to make themselves heard :

"Sergeant," the officer hastened to add, addressing an old soldier, whose grey moustache inspired a certain confidence, "take six men, conduct these *brigandes* to prison, and remember that thou shalt answer for them with thy head. As for you," said he to the rest of the troop, "follow me to headquarters, I am going thither immediately."

Mme. Boguais cast upon the young officer a look full of gratitude. Prison, which in those dreadful times was almost always the stepping-stone to the scaffold, now seemed to her but a haven of refuge where honor might, at least, be safe from peril. The officer soon disappeared with the rest of the soldiery, and the six Vendean females, half dead with fright, followed, with trembling footsteps, those who were charged with the office of conducting them.

After walking for some time, Mme. Gourreau, in taking her handkerchief from her pocket, unfortunately let fall some pieces of gold, which, in the hurry of departure, she had not had sufficient time to conceal. The sight of this gold suddenly aroused the feelings of cupidity rife in this little troop of republicans, unworthy of the name of French soldiers ;

more base and cowardly than highway robbers, they flung themselves all at once upon this poor woman, whom they were commissioned to protect, and proceeded to institute a brutal search of her person with a view of possessing themselves of whatever might be found upon her.

"I will die with you," cried Mme. de La Fouchere, mistaking their intentions, and flinging herself wildly into the arms of her mother, whom she vainly strove to cover with her own body.

The republicans repulsed her; she resisted with wonderful courage, and in the unequal struggle, a hair chain which she wore round her neck unfortunately gave way, and the portrait of her young brother escaped from her bosom.

"Here is the face of an aristocrat!" said one of the soldiers, picking up the miniature, "one would think it was the leader of the brigands himself."

"Yes! yes, it is the portrait of the leader of the brigands, I recollect him well," added his comrade, "and this woman belongs to him, no doubt. Death to the wife of the leader of the brigands!" cried he, plunging his sabre into her heart.

"Death to the wife of the leader of the brigands!" was echoed with zealous emulation by all the others as they fell upon her with their bayonets.

It was the work of an instant; a few moments later and both mother and daughter had breathed their last sigh in each other's arms, whilst their sanguinary executioners were greedily occupied in divid-

ing the spoil, which consisted of a sum of six hundred francs in gold, and some valuable jewels which they had taken from the persons of their unhappy victims.

“Ten thousand thunders!” at length exclaimed the old sergeant, who had taken care to have his share of the horrid booty, “my opinion is that we are in a nice scrape! Did not the adjutant-general say that we should answer for these women with our heads?”

“Oh! a brigande more or less—what does it matter?” replied he who had struck the first blow; “let us convey those that remain to prison, I dare say he will not come there to count them!”

“Come, then, march, and quickly, too; I shall be glad to have done with this job,” replied the sub-officer with a disquietude in which a slight trace of remorse might be distinguished; “come, march, do you hear, brigandes?”

But the poor women, dumb with horror, with eyes closed, and faces bathed in a cold perspiration, remained motionless as statues, in a state which it is impossible to describe. The soldiers, perceiving that they were quite incapable of moving of their own accord, began to drag them along and drive them in the midst of them to the prison, which soon enclosed them within its gloomy walls.



CHAPTER V.

Two days after the enactment of this tragic scene, a commissioner, followed by five or six military officials, entered the same house in the Rue Basse which had been occupied by the Boguais family. He was a man in the very prime of life, tall, finely formed, and of a grave but withal pleasing countenance.

"Silence!" he cried to his subordinates,—whose loud voices and blustering oaths made poor Petronille quake with fear,—“take care that no one has cause of complaint against you here; whoever commits the slightest outrage shall answer for it to me.”

Petronille was certainly well off under the circumstances,—for not only had her dwelling escaped the cannon shot and bullets, with which almost every other house from the Mission to the Place des Halles was riddled, but she had been singularly fortunate in the character of the parties who had sought refuge beneath her roof, a piece of rare good luck, since few of the republican officers gave themselves much trouble about the conduct of their men.

Encouraged by the reassuring words of the commissioner, the old lady summoned up resolutions to

advance and welcome him, at the same time proffering her services.

M. de Fromental, for so this officer was named, although he did not treat his hostess with the exquisite courtesy of the Chevalier de St. Louis, nevertheless showed towards her all the respect due to her age and sex, and after having seen that his men were supplied with all they wanted, he was conducted to the chamber occupied the preceding evening by the Ladies Boguais.

"Pardon! citizen," said Petronille, hastily snatching up several articles of female apparel scattered here and there;—"we have been so bewildered these two or three days that no one has had time to put things to rights here, but it will be done in a moment."

So saying, she flung into a large trunk which stood open a motley collection of gowns and neckerchiefs, with the honest intention of restoring them to their owners should she ever meet with them again.

M. de Fromental, who was impatient to be alone, was aiding her in her work of clearing away the things which were lying about, when he perceived at the bottom of a drawer an object which soon engrossed his whole attention. It was an ebony frame beautifully carved and encircling a most beautiful painting. This little picture, above fifteen inches in height, represented a lovely woman, half reclining on a luxurious couch, holding between her white and plump palms the chubby hands of two little sweet girls who,

leaning upon their mother's shoulder in an attitude replete with careless grace, were tenderly smiling in her face, whilst a third still younger was seated on a stool at her feet, with her head resting upon her mother's knees.

Astonished at seeing her guest absorbed in mute contemplation, and unable to resist the desire to know the cause of it, Mlle. Petronille approached softly from behind, and stepping on the points of her toes to obtain a single sight of the picture which he held in his hand, she could not restrain her admiration, and exclaimed involuntarily :

"Good Heavens! how like Mlle. Eulalie, especially!"

"They are real portraits, then,?" said M. de Fromental; "I took this for a mere fancy picture: an admirable painting upon my word!"

"No, no, I knew them in a moment; it is Mme. Boguais and her three daughters."

"Who is this Madame Boguais?" asked he, endeavoring to revive his recollection, as though the name was not altogether unfamiliar to him.

Mlle. Petronille hesitated for an instant; she almost regretted having said so much; but as the officer, still retaining the picture in his hand, appeared to await a reply, she stammered out, blushing as she spoke:

"She is a *brigande* citizen, but quite unlike the others of the party; she is a good woman, you may believe me. We cannot always do as we would in

this world; when the brigands entered the town, they took possession of our houses, and we were obliged to put up with it, whether we liked it or not. The Boguais family lodged with me; I am a good patriot, citizen commissioner, and my principles are well known in the neighborhood, but I must nevertheless confess that these people behaved as well to me as the best republicans could possibly have done; the mother was polite and affable, the young girls mild and gentle as lambs, and as for their uncle, the chevalier, he was indeed a fine man! and still young for his age; he was everything that was kind and amiable!"

"And what has become of these poor women?" inquired the officer, interrupting Petronille.

"Alas! the unhappy creatures left yesterday morning in the hope of escaping with such of the brigands as succeeded in quitting the town. I went up to the loft to watch them out of sight, for it was sad to see them go away thus without any one to protect them; they were joined by two other brigands who came out of a neighboring house, and I soon lost sight of them, but I heard afterwards that they had been taken by the soldiers and put in prison, and it is a great pity truly, for I will put my right hand in the fire if those unfortunate women are not as innocent as newborn babes. What shall I do with this picture, citizen? Shall I put it in the trunk?"

"Rather hang it on this nail, it will be less likely to

be injured, which would be a pity, for it was painted by the hand of an artist."

Mlle. Petronille hastened to comply with this request, and as the officer did not appear disposed to renew the conversation, she quitted the apartment, begging him to consider himself at home in her house, but at the same time to have the kindness to continue to maintain good order among his subordinates.

No sooner did M. de Fromental find himself alone than he took down the picture and examined it again with attention.

"How charming!" said he, contemplating particularly the likeness of that one of the three sisters who had been pointed out to him by the name of Eulalie. "Boguais, her name is Boguais! I ought certainly to know that name; my uncle has spoken to me a hundred times of a Boguais of Angers, with whom he was at one time closely connected, and who emigrated at the commencement of the revolution; he is doubtless the father of these young ladies, for he had three daughters to the best of my recollection. In prison too. Ah well! it is better perhaps than to be tracked like wild beasts on the road to Laval, or in any of the neighboring farms! Good Heavens, what fearful times! What crimes! what misfortunes!"

Saying these words, the young man sank into the only arm-chair in the apartment, and leaning his head upon the table, gave himself up to the most sorrowful reflections.

Although an officer in the service of the French republic, M. de Fromental was far from approving of its excesses. Born of one of the most distinguished families of Lorraine, he had at first welcomed with joy those earliest cries of liberty which found so ready an echo in the breasts of the generous spirits whose judgment years and experience had not yet ripened; but soon disenchanted by the crimes of the Revolution, he remembered his former sympathy with these brilliant theories, whose fruits proved so bitter; and the 10th of August found him faithful to his post in the constitutional guard of Louis XVI., of which he was then a member. After having been twenty times on the point of being massacred on that fatal day, he nevertheless succeeded in regaining, a short time after, the little town of Blamont, his native place, where he lived, plunged in the deepest melancholy, bewailing at once his own lost illusions, the fall of the monarchy, and the misfortunes of France. Under this sanguinary code, however, which had been created in the derisive name of "liberty," none could remain passive spectators of the internal struggles by which the country was rent asunder; M. de Fromental was forced to choose between the scaffold and the post of commissioner general in the army of the republic. Whatever spark of French honor still remained, had sought refuge in the camp. After some hesitation, M. de Fromental resolved upon accepting the situation offered to him and it was thus that, dispatched to the army of the East, he had arrived at Le Mans

three days after the battle of which we have already spoken.

Midnight sounded from the clock placed in a corner of the room, and whether it was that the twelve successive strokes had, by interrupting the young man's reverie, reminded him that he had a duty to fulfil or that a sudden idea presented itself at that moment to his mind, he rose abruptly, and pushing away the table which had served him for a support, took his sword and hat from the bed where he had deposited them, and hastily quitted the apartment.

Having gained the street, the commissioner general seemed to hesitate for a moment as to the road he should take, then turning to the right, he rapidly proceeded down the Rue Basse, and in a few minutes arrived at the seminary of the Mission, formerly the hospital of Coeffort.*

On seeing the insignia of his rank, which conferred upon him the right of inspection in the military establishments, the sentinels presented arms, and every door flew open before him. He trod with repressed emotion the precincts of this vast building, whose walls had resounded for so many ages with the praises of God. A melancholy spectacle presented

* Coeffort was an hospital, founded about the year 1180, by Henry the Second, King of England. In later times it was reunited to the hospital general of Le Mans, and confided to the direction of the Lazarist Brothers, of whom Coeffort became the seminary; it was then that it first received the title of the Mission.

itself to his sight; he beheld human beings pale, in rags, wanting common clothing, and frozen with cold, infirm old men heaped together, a mass of living misery upon a little damp straw. And yet no murmur escaped their pallid lips, and their calm and resigned countenances announced that peace which a good conscience could alone bestow.

"What men are these?" asked the commissioner general of the turnkey who served him as a guide.

"They are priests, who have refused to take the oath," replied the latter.

Willingly would M. de Fromental have bared his head before these noble sufferers, but this simple mark of respect would have sufficed to compromise him; he therefore carefully concealed his feelings, visited the other parts of the building, which were crowded with poor Vendean peasants, so exhausted with fatigue that a great number of them were buried in a profound sleep on the bare stones, while awaiting their sentence of death, and then proceeded on his way to visit the Oratory of St. Croix and the Ursuline Convent, which he knew were also crowded with prisoners. He had scarcely gone a few paces when the noise of musketry fell on his ear. This sound, coming from the direction of Pontlieue, decided him upon retracing his footsteps, and he rapidly directed his course towards this quarter, which had for several days been the scene of many a sanguinary conflict. The alley, planted with trees, which led to it, was still thickly strewn with dead bodies; con-

querors and conquered lay stretched together upon the humid soil, without the possibility of distinguishing one from the other, for all had been despoiled of their clothing. Accustomed as he was to the horrors of war, the officer could not refrain from shuddering at this sight. But on this side of the bridge, where pitchforks and such simple implements of husbandry were wont to be seen, a spectacle still more affecting presented itself to his view.

About fifty Vendéans of all ages and of both sexes had just been shot, not killed, sword in hand, in the heat of battle, but ruthlessly murdered in cold blood. A great number of them, mortally wounded, but in whom life was still not extinct, writhed and struggled in the convulsions of mortal agony. A young mother, with her head shattered by a bullet, pressed to her tortured bosom her helpless infant, who rent the air with its cries, while a poor little girl of twelve or thirteen, slightly wounded on the right side, and covered with the blood of her friends and relatives, wildly implored mercy on her knees.

Swifter than lightning M. de Fromental rushed into the midst of this scene of carnage, and seizing the arm of the ruthless soldier at the moment when the latter was preparing to put the finishing stroke to his tender victim with the butt end of his gun:

"Stop!" cried he; "this child has not yet reached the age prescribed by the law."

"Very well!" muttered the republican carelessly,

"do as you like citizen, it's the same thing to me after all!"

And he retreated with the rest of his troop.

M. de Fromental gently raised the little girl, and speaking to her kindly, did his best to soothe and comfort her, greatly embarrassed all the while as to where he should procure a shelter for his interesting charge, when an old woman, who had been a witness of the scene, advanced, and in a voice trembling with emotion :

"Sir," said she, "I had an only son ; he was drawn in the conscription, and died on the field of battle ; if you will only intrust these two orphans to my care,' (pointing to the little girl, and the little boy whose mother had just breathed her last,) "I will take care of them for the sake, and in memory of my poor lost Augustus."

"Take them away quickly then, my good woman," replied he in an under tone, "and may God reward you for this good action!"

And his spirit somewhat calmed by this act of benevolence, which came so opportunely to prove to him that humanity was not yet banished from the human heart, he pursued his way, and hastily returned towards the city.



CHAPTER VI.

AFTER having visited in vain the Presbytery of Saint Croix, and the Convent of the Ursulines, without discovering those of whom he was in search, the commissioner arrived at length at the Place des Jacobins, which was still strewn with the mutilated corpses of about thirty women and children, whom the execrable Pottier La Morandiere had that morning caused to be dragged from the houses of detention in the city, stripped of their clothes in his presence, and then beaten to death with swords and sticks.

M. de Fromental turned his head aside, shuddering with horror, and hastened onwards, directing his course with rapid strides towards a vast building composed of two unequal parts, which was easily recognizable as a monastery, the chapel being surmounted by a cross which had, as yet, escaped the rage of the republicans. This was the house of the Oratory, where numbers of the Vendean women were confined. Violently torn from their husbands and brothers, exhausted with fatigue, and overwhelmed with grief, they were all thrust indiscriminately into the church, with no food but a little coarse black

bread, no place on which to rest their aching limbs but the damp stones of the prison, and nothing to shield them from the piercing cold of December save garments mostly in rags. Many of them were attacked with a terrible epidemic, (the result of the privations they had endured,) which at that time decimated the Vendean army. Thus, when the commissioner general entered this dismal abode, he felt almost suffocated by the infected atmosphere; his heart sickened within him, as he contemplated the depth of misery to which these poor females were reduced, some of whom, reared in the bosom of opulence, had formerly held a distinguished position in the world. The countenance of the brave officer, usually so calm and dignified, no doubt betrayed the deep compassion with which his whole soul was filled, for a young captive, overcoming the timidity natural to her age, ventured to approach him, and with eyes swimming in tears :

“Sir,” said she, clasping her hands, “my mother is very ill, and it is very cold; would you order them to give us some coverings to warm us?”

M. de Fromental regarded the poor child who had just addressed to him this humble request, and whose noble and pure brow was suddenly suffused with crimson :

“Where is your mother?” asked he.

“There!” replied she, with her soft and gentle voice, pointing to a lady pale as death lying under

the dome of the sanctuary, whom two other young girls were supporting in their arms.

The commissioner general hesitated a few seconds, examining alternately the young suppliant and the group she designated; then, approaching the invalid, and leaning down to her ear:

"Are you not Mme. Boguais?" he asked in a low voice.

"Yes, sir."

"Well, then," added he, still whispering, "do not let it appear that any one recognizes you here, but, at the same time, keep up your courage; there are those who take an interest in your fate."

"Ah!" replied the poor mother, with an energetic expression of impassioned tenderness, "if there be any one who is interested in me, let him save my children, sir."

"Them and you, if possible."

"Them first, that is all-important. Besides," added she in a low voice, which the officer only could hear, "as for me, I have not much longer to live."

"Keep up your courage, and rely on the devotion of a friend."

He withdrew at once, leaving Mme. Boguais in a state of mind more easy to imagine than describe.

"What has he been saying to you, mamma?" cried the three young girls as soon as M. de Fromental was gone.

Their mother then repeated with the greatest animation, and almost word for word, what the young

officer had said, gathering from this slight and newly-conceived hope strength that had seemed almost extinct.

"Who can this friend be who protects us, then?" they earnestly demanded.

"I do not know, my children; I know no one here."

"Oh!" said Celeste, joyfully clapping her hands, "do you not see that it must be my uncle, the chevalier, who, having returned from seeking us, and finding us no longer in the house of the old lady, has begged this republican officer to inquire after us?"

"Alas!" replied Mme. Boguais, sorrowfully shaking her head, "if my poor cousin is still in this world, which I greatly doubt, he must have left Le Mans with the scattered remains of the army, without its being possible for him to return thither."

"But after all, mamma, this mysterious personage, who interests himself in our fate, as this officer pretends——"

"I will wager anything he is speaking of himself," said Eulalie.

"Oh! no," replied the mother, "his countenance is quite strange to me, and besides, I have no friends among the republicans."

"Nevertheless, I observed him look at us attentively, as if he were striving to recollect us; and then he seemed so sorry at seeing your suffering! Republican as he is, I am quite sure he is a worthy man, and has a good heart."

Eulalie was thus speaking when the door of the

chapel grated anew upon its hinges, and two of the turnkeys entered bearing bundles of straw, which they began to distribute among the prisoners according to the orders they had just received from the commissioner general. When it came to the turn of the Boguais family, as the poor mother was ising to receive her portion, the elder of the men said to her in a rough tone :

“As for you, citizeness, you must follow me directly.”

“Whither would you lead us ?” asked she in a voice choked with agony.

“You will know all in good time,” replied the fellow.

During the three days that the Vendéans had been prisoners, bayonets and the guillotine had several times thinned their ranks ; a certain number had been taken at random and led to execution. Mme. Boguais asked herself if her turn had arrived to meet death face to face. Had she been alone in the world, she would have welcomed death as a blessing, but she trembled for her beloved daughters, still so young, in the full flower of their youth and beauty ! Would the poor mother have to endure the horrible misery of seeing the blood of these loved ones flow ? or was she then about to bid them an eternal adieu, and leave them in that abode of horror exposed without guide or protection to perils of every description ?

These racking thoughts, which chased each other through the poor mother’s burning brain, almost de

prived her of her senses, and she would have sunk fainting on the ground if her daughters had not hastened to her assistance.

"Come, none of your tricks," said the brutal gaoler, who looked like an executioner himself, "you must make yourself scarce here, you and all your brood."

Rosalie and one of her sisters took their mother by the arm, and led her away without a word. They followed the gaoler through two or three long passages, and at last stopped before a little door half hidden by a projecting wall, whilst he leisurely chose from the huge bunch of keys which hung at his side, that which opened this nook, and then introduced the captives into a species of closet into which air and light were only allowed to penetrate by a narrow window strongly secured with iron bars.

"There, my chickens! you will live like queens here," said he, in a tone which he meant to be friendly, "to say nothing of your being allowed mattresses and quilts, and some famous soup made of cabbage and bacon. Don't you think yourselves lucky to be treated like this?"

And, indeed, in a quarter of an hour, he had brought all he promised, and even more in the shape of a little deal table and two common chairs. The soup, so much vaunted, was, it must be admitted, nothing but a mixture of hot water and cabbage leaves, in which some large pieces of black bread were soaked; but such as it was, Mme. Boguais contrived to swallow a few spoonfuls, and the three sisters, who were suf-

fering from hunger, consumed the remainder with a good appetite. The air of this closet, much less noxious than that of the chapel, was already felt as a real blessing to these unhappy females, and as for the mattresses and quilts, they made them almost joyful. The young girls hastened to prepare a bed for the invalid; then after offering up their heartfelt thanks to God for this unhopèd-for solace to their misery, they likewise betook themselves to their pallets, and were soon buried in profound slumber.

The day had long dawned, when the grating of the door and the rough voice of the gaoler suddenly aroused them.

"What! not up yet, lazy ones!" cried he jestingly; "how is the little mother? here is something that will make her well at once, and besides that, a box which I am desired to give to you: if it were only as full of money as it is of women's rags, there would be a pretty little sum!"

With these words he deposited against the wall a little trunk, placed upon the table a smoking bowl of soup, and then withdrew.

He was hardly out of the room when the three sisters jumped up, and running to the trunk to see what it contained, what was their surprise and joy to find there all the things they had been obliged to leave at the house of the citizeness Chevert;—everything in fact, with the exception of the picture destined long since for their absent father, but which, never having

been enabled to convey to him, they had taken with them when they fled from Angers.

"But, after all, to whom are we indebted for this fresh indulgence?" asked they of each other; "what can be the name of this mysterious benefactor?"

When the gaoler revisited them in the evening, the young girls overwhelmed him with questions as to who had sent them the trunk; but whether the man was really ignorant of the name of their generous protector, or whether he had been strictly ordered to keep the secret, he contented himself with giving some vague information which only served to excite, while it failed to satisfy, the curiosity of the captives.

In the meantime M. de Fromental, for it will be easily guessed that it was he who had induced the gaoler to transfer the four prisoners to this little closet, in order that they might stand a chance of being forgotten by the purveyors for the guillotine—and who had besides managed that the articles left behind at the Cheverts should be conveyed to them—M. de Fromental was planning a still greater enterprise in their behalf. Ardent and generous by nature, he never did anything by halves; having voluntarily undertaken the mission of protecting these hapless beings, he earnestly desired to rescue them from impending death, and restore them to liberty, although he well knew the peril of such an attempt.

He spared no means in order to induce the gaoler to consent to their escape; but he had to deal with

a man at once cowardly and avaricious, who, either from the fear of compromising himself, or else in the hope of selling his compliance yet more dearly, constantly started fresh objections to the plan he proposed.

A month passed by in this manner, when one morning the commissioner general received orders to set out immediately for Nantes. There was no longer a moment to lose; he must accomplish his generous design within the next twenty-four hours, or renounce it forever.

His heart filled with anxiety, and his brain almost on fire, he hastily quitted his chamber and set off at almost a running pace in the direction of the Oratory. Fortunately the air soon restored to him the self-possession and reflection of which he stood so much in need; he felt the necessity of slackening his pace, and controlling his emotion in order to avoid suspicion. He had besides a difficult game to play with the gaoler; to be liberal with his gifts, and at the same time keep that individual in proper awe of him.

"And how do our protegees get on, citizen Scévola?" said he, accosting the Cerberus in the most friendly tone he could assume.

"Rather say *your* protegees, citizen," responded the gaoler in a bantering way.

"Well, mine, then, if you like, although it was only the other day you confessed that the three children—for these young girls are nothing but children—did

you good to see them, they were so pretty and so good-humored."

"It is true they are well enough for aristocrats, especially when they say to me in their coaxing way :

" 'My good sir, (they call me sir, the same as in former times,) do tell us who sent us this, who sent us that ?' "

"And for my part I am obliged to tell them the first thing that comes into my head ; but I do them justice, I take good care of them, and if it costs you a trifle too much, citizen, you may make your mind easy that they are excellently well looked after in their hole ; and as for that, they never complain, but are singing away all day long just like so many linnets."

"All very well, but linnets, you know, do not live long in a cage ; we must have the air of the fields for them, and that without delay."

"Ay, ay, there it is again ; always singing the same tune ; a little patience ; and the plague——"

"I tell you, once for all, my patience is at an end, and I can wait no longer," cried the commissioner general, abandoning in spite of himself the tone of moderation he had at first assumed. "You have been cajoling me with fine words for the last month ; it is time now we should have something more !"

"Ho ! ho !" replied the gaoler impatiently, "you take a good deal upon you, master commissioner ! a word more, and I reconduct your proteges, as you

call them, to prison; since you are so anxious they should breathe the fresh air, that will be the *shortest cut to it.*"

"Listen!" said the officer, seizing the fellow by the arm, "I have no time to lose in idle words; do you see this purse? it contains in gold the five hundred pieces agreed upon between us; now I will double this sum if the persons are given up to me this very evening."

"First let go my arm, for you squeeze it hard enough to break the bones," said Scevola, casting a longing look upon the pieces of gold which glistened through the silken network of the purse. "I do not object to enter into arrangements, but at the same time we must be reasonable; I cannot accomplish *all* that you desire."

"Oh! you cannot!—wretch!" cried the officer beside himself with passion; "you cannot, and yet with half the sum I now offer, no later than the day before yesterday, you favored the escape of the citizeness Foubert with her two nieces; and for a still less sum you suffered a poor old brigande, for whom a small ransom was paid by an inhabitant of the town, to depart! You see I am well informed, citizen Scevola, and I now say that if you refuse to do as much for these ladies as you have done for so many others, I will denounce you at once to the revolutionary tribunal."

"Ah! citizen," said he in a more subdued tone, turning somewhat pale, "you would not be the ruin

of a poor wretch like me, the *father* of a large family, who has already done *everything* in his power to serve you. I am very willing to oblige you still farther; but you know there are things which are not. Listen to me in my turn, and you shall see if I lie," added he quickly, seeing that his interlocutor made a gesture of impatience. "Although you have played a very cunning game with me, and have never told me the name of these aristocrats, I have known it for a very long time, and unfortunately I am not the only one, for it was already inscribed on the prison register when you first spoke of them to me."

It was now M. de Fromental's turn to change color.

"The proof of what you state," said he quickly.

"The proof! see here!" replied the gaoler, opening the fatal book, and pointing to the name of Mme. Boguais.

The commissioner general was struck dumb at this discovery, for he perceived fully that it was impossible to expect Scevola to expose himself to certain death by conniving at the escape of prisoners whose identity had been established.

"Why did you not tell me this sooner?" said he.

"Why? why, because I did not want to vex you beforehand."

He did not care to avow his real object, which was to extract from M. de Fromental as large a sum of money as possible.

"So then, all hope is lost!" said the young man in

an under tone, and as if speaking to himself. "Farewell to all my dreams."

"Oh! you despair too soon," rejoined Scevola, who had been attentively observing him—thinking as he did so of the purse of gold, the hope of obtaining which he could not bring himself to relinquish.

"What say you?" quickly replied the officer starting up.

"I will explain myself shortly," replied the gaoler, "for I hear some one knocking at the door, and we must not be seen conferring together. Step into this closet while I will get rid of this troublesome visitor; and when I return we will see whether we cannot come to an understanding together."



CHAPTER VII.

It was eleven o'clock in the morning; the sky was without a cloud, and the sun, almost arrived at the meridian, penetrated even into the dismal abode tenanted by the Boguais family.

The three young girls, seated by the side of their mother, contemplated with melancholy joy the solitary sunbeam which illumined the wall of their dungeon.

"The fine weather has returned again," said Celeste; "how delightful it would be now to take a walk in the open air!"

Eulalie touched her elbow to remind her that this was a forbidden subject; for the three sisters had tacitly refrained from any expression of regret, which could only augment the grief of their mother; but the movement was perceived by Mme. Boguais, who readily divined the cause, and a tear shone through her half-closed eyelids.

"Let poor Celeste speak her mind, my dear," said she; "at her age it is but natural that she should pine for fresh air and liberty."

"Oh, mamma!" said Celeste, striving to force a smile, "I am not unhappy here, I assure you, since I am with you. Besides," added she, "the time will come, and

is not far off, I dare say, when we shall all go out together to walk in the park. What a pleasure it will be to see the beautiful country again, and the little birds, flying among the branches of the trees, and the flowers in my garden which will be so lovely in the spring! The very thought of it makes me full of joy!"

Mme. Boguais imprinted a fervent kiss on the forehead of her child, but she remained silent, for she was far from sharing her hope.

At this moment the sound of footsteps was heard in the passage.

"I hear some one coming," said Eulalie, "but it is not dinner time yet; what can Scevola want?"

"It sounds like several persons," observed the eldest sister.

The door softly opened, and a man entered the chamber alone, but it was not Scevola.

In spite of the large cloak which enveloped the person of the new comer, Eulalie instantly recognized the republican officer, who had spoken to them in the chapel.

"Madame," said the stranger, bowing profoundly, "the favor of paying my respects to you is only accorded for a few moments. Suffer, me, therefore, to come at once to the object of my visit. I am the nephew of M. de Fromental, an old friend of M. Boguais."

"I knew the viscount well," replied Mme. Boguais, with a gentle inclination of her head in return; "he

was an excellent man whom we highly esteemed, what has become of him, pray?"

"He was killed in the army of the prince, Madame, and in our days, it is a blessing thus to die in the field of battle; but it is not of him that I would now speak. My uncle has often spoken to me of you and your family, and, ever since by a lucky chance I came to know you were taken prisoners, I have strained every nerve in the hope of being serviceable to you."

"Ah, Sir, you are then that friend, that unknown benefactor, of whom a republican officer spoke in mysterious terms to us, in the early part of our captivity. It is to you we are indebted for being still in this world, and for being less miserable than our companions in misfortune! Oh, a thousand blessings on you for all your kindness."

"The republican officer and myself, Madame, are one and the same person," said M. de Fromental, slightly coloring, and half opening his cloak to allow his uniform to appear. "The slight services I have been enabled to render you are few, indeed, compared with what I would have wished to have done. My object has been to restore you and these young ladies to liberty; for a long time I thought I could attain my aim, but an unfortunate circumstance which has only just become known to me, has disconcerted all my plans; you have been recognized under your own name, and inscribed on the prison register, together with one of your daughters, from the first period of your confinement. It is therefore impossible to per-

suade the gaoler to connive at your escape, since he can only do so at the risk of his own head; but I can save two of these young ladies. Scevola, won over by my entreaties, will come for them to-morrow morning; a highly respectable lady, whom I have known for some time, will with pleasure receive them into her house, where they will be treated with every kindness and attention. We will then consult together as to the best means of providing for your own safety, and that of the one among your daughters who remains with you."

Mme. Boguais could not refrain her tears.

"Pardon me, Sir," said she, using all her efforts to overcome her emotion, "if I fail in expressing all the gratitude with which my heart is overflowing; but you can understand," added she in an under tone, "how difficult it must be for a mother to select a victim from amongst her own children! Ah! if you could but save all three! I should then die happy! I feel, however, it is impossible, and that it is my duty as a mother to avail myself of the chance of safety you offer for two of them. I accept, therefore, Sir, your generous offer, and I confide to your protection treasures more precious to me than all the riches of the earth."

"I thank you for this mark of confidence, Madame," hastily interrupted the young man; "I will do all in my power to prove myself worthy of it; may this cruel separation be but of short duration!"

He took the hand the poor lady extended to him

with an emotion which he no longer sought to conceal, carried it respectfully to his lips, and withdrew.

He was no sooner gone than the young girls threw themselves all at once into their mother's arms.

"Mamma," said Eulalie, after a long embrace "Celeste greatly needs to leave this place and breathe a purer air, for she grows paler and paler every day. Rosalie, who possesses more discretion than any of us, will be best able to take care of her, and I shall remain with you.'

"No, no," cried Rosalie, "as eldest, this privilege belongs to me; I claim my right of birth."

"The right of birth has nothing to do with it," said Celeste, in her turn; "you are very quick in your decisions, you two; you manage everything your own way; but I claim to remain with mamma. What would become of me without her?"

This touching debate was prolonged for some time in the same strain, each of the three bringing forward every reason she could think of why she should be the one to be left. Madame Boguais could only shed tears of grief and affection. She had not the courage to decide; the very idea of a separation rent her motherly heart with anguish.

"It is not till to-morrow," said she at length; "let us endeavor, meanwhile, to seek a little repose."

Their evening devotions being first performed, they threw themselves on their pallets without undressing. The three young girls were soon asleep, but the poor mother could not close her eyes. About four in the

morning she thought she heard sounds like that of footsteps in the passage, which gradually became more distinct, until at last the door of the prison was softly opened.

The gaoler entered the prison, carrying a dark lantern

"Come; up with you! there is not a moment to lose," said he. "Eulalie and Celeste, come along, both of you."

"My dear sisters! it is you who are called," cried Rosalie.

"You are mistaken, sister," cried Eulalie, starting up

"Mamma must decide," objected Celeste

"Well, will you have done with all this bother?" said Scevola, growing impatient; "I was told the two youngest; I know my orders, I hope."

"Eulalie, Celeste! go, go, my beloved children," said Madame Boguais, straining them both to her heart; "go, in the name of the duty and obedience you owe your mother; go, and may God watch over and protect you!"

"Mother! sister! when shall we meet again?" cried the two youngest, sobbing convulsively, and again embracing them by turns.

"Zounds! are you coming at all?" said Scevola, stamping with impatience; "would not any one think to see you that you were going to be burnt alive? Are you mad? The citizen commissioner must be in a perfect fever down there by this time; to say nothing of the fact that it will soon be day-

light, and if any one should see us pass, both he and I might have reason to repent it."

And with these words he dragged them away almost by main force.

Mme. Boguais leant against the door to catch the last sound of the retreating footsteps of her two children; a prolonged sob reached her ear, and once more a profound silence reigned throughout the corridor.

"Protect them, my God!" cried the poor mother, "and if it be Thy will that I should never see them more on earth, grant that we may all meet again one day in Heaven!"

Rosalie added a fervent "Amen!" while she made the sign of the cross.

Then throwing themselves into each other's arms, the two captives remained long absorbed in prayers and tears.



CHAPTER VIII.

MORNING had hardly dawned when a convoy of provisions, with divers military equipments, slowly traversed a portion of the city on its way to Angers. The escort of soldiers was numerous, and well armed; the men marched on gaily, indifferent of fatigue and danger, whistling, and singing snatches of joyous songs.

The officer in command was an old red-faced captain, who armed himself against the nipping morning air by frequent applications to a well-filled gourd which hung at his side. Another officer of superior rank—a young and handsome man, habited in the uniform of a commissioner general, brought up the rear of the army, and followed at a slow pace the last wagon in the cavalcade, although he had some difficulty in restraining the ardor of his beautiful bay charger, who snorted with impatience.

“Well, Parisian,” said a young sergeant to one of his comrades, as soon as they had passed the town of Pontlieue, “you who have usually so much to say, have you managed to leave your tongue in the city as well as your heart?”

"I have neither left one nor the other," replied the Parisian.

"What is this fresh mood then? how comes it that you are as mute as a fish to-day, you who generally chatter faster than a hundred magpies at a time? Why, you are as preoccupied as a commander-in-chief the night before a battle?"

"Preoccupied as I may be, comrade, there is some one not very far off who is a great deal more so. Look, Fier a Bras, just look at the commissioner I have been amusing myself for the last half hour with, watching him all the way along; he seems ready to devour the last wagon with his eyes, and follows like a shadow."

"That is true," said Fier a Bras, after having made his own observations; "but what does that prove? Is that any reason why we should not converse a little, if only to while away the time?"

"It proves, my boy, that there must be more gold in that chest than either your purse or mine has ever contained; and my opinion is that if that same chest were just to come to smash on the road, it would be worth one's while to pick up the bits."

"I should rather think that there were arms inside."

"And for my part I feel sure that it contains nothing more or less than good solid coin."

"I wager you a dozen glasses of the best brandy that it contains muskets."

"Stay;—there is the commissioner just stopping

his dear wagon, and unlocking the cnest; we shall be just in time to see what he takes from it."

"Oh! see, he is off again. What can he have taken out of the chest? I did not see anything for my part."

"Nor I either, and yet the chest is not quite shut; by getting a little nearer, we might, without seeming to notice anything, contrive to learn which of us two is to have the honor of paying for the cognac?"

"Leave me alone to manage it," said Fier a Bras, "before another quarter of an hour I shall have found out all about it. We have just arrived at Arnage, where we halt, and you shall see."

"Well, who is the winner, you or I, old fellow?" said the Parisian, when the convoy had resumed its march.

"Let us speak of it no more," replied his companion with a thoughtful air.

"Ah! is it not gold then after all that you saw?" Never mind, don't be downhearted—if funds are low, I will willingly give you credit."

"Do you really then imagine you have won?" said Fier a Bras, shrugging his shoulders. "Undeceive yourself; there is no more gold in that chest than there are sabres or firearms."

"Why, what is there then?"

"Hush! strange things happen every day," said Fier a Bras, almost in the ear of his friend: "I know not if there be witchcraft in the affair, but I had no sooner approached the chest, than I heard

the sound of groans which proceeded from it: it sounded for all the world like a woman's voice."

"Ah! is the commissioner such a gay fellow?—as for witchcraft, I for one do not believe a word of it. But, after all, if it really should be a woman, why should he take so much pains to conceal it?"

"That is exactly what I said to myself at first."

"The commissioner is an aristocrat, for certain. I have suspected that for a long time," said the Parisian, after a moment's reflection: "he is quite capable of having hidden some royalist dame, to get her out of trouble, for the air of the city is not wholesome for such persons just now."

"It may be so, certainly," replied Fier a Bras, somewhat reassured, "but in either case it will not be I that shall denounce him, for aristocrat or not, he is a good fellow;—a man after my own heart."

The two sergeants had guessed rightly; the chest contained Eulalie and Celeste Boguais. M. de Fromental could find no better means of concealing them from the vigilance of the republican gendarmes than by locking them up in his chest, which was supposed to contain a quantity of luggage. An intelligent and faithful servant was alone let into the secret; once arrived at the first stage of their journey, he was to release the young girls from this rolling prison, and conduct them to Chateaubriand where they were expected. M. de Fromental's duty obliging him to repair at once to Nantes, he quitted the cavalcade at the end of a few hours' march, after repeating to the

good Jerome the instructions he had before given him.

Arrived at the end of his journey, he anxiously awaited the return of his domestic, who had orders to rejoin him as soon as he had accomplished his mission. The young officer had calculated that six days would suffice for Jerome to conduct the two ladies to Chateaubriand, and afterwards return to him at Nantes. The eighth day arrived, but no Jerome appeared. M. de Fromental, a prey to the most anxious solicitude, could neither eat nor sleep.

"If I should only have snatched them from their prison, to plunge them into yet greater dangers!" said he despairingly to himself.

At length one evening, as he was alone in his room, seated before the fire, with his head resting on his hands, buried in a reverie, Jerome suddenly presented himself before him.

"Ah! here you are at last!" exclaimed the young man. "Have you had a prosperous journey? How are they all at Chateaubriand?"

"Sir," replied the domestic, with an embarrassed air, "what I have to relate will give you pain. An accident has befallen us by the way."

"What has happened? Speak——"

"Well, then, honored sir! the young ladies you know? I had no sooner released them from the chest than I perceived that one of them was as pale as a corpse, and unable to stand. I supported her on my arm to the best room the inn afforded, sent to fetch

a doctor immediately, and in the meantime both her sister and myself tended her with every possible care ; but it was all in vain, in the course of a few hours the poor creature breathed her last. The other young lady took on so, it made one sad to see her. At last we managed to get her safely housed, but still very melancholy, with the old lady, who received her like her own daughter."

"Which of the two have survived?" asked the officer, scarcely able to breathe with anxiety.

"The tallest, Mademoiselle Eulalie, she who has such rosy cheeks, and such a stately figure, you know ! She gave me a letter for you."

"Hand it to me," replied M. de Fromental, a little relieved by this explanation, for if all the Boguais family inspired him with a tender interest, and generous devotion, it was Eulalie who had the most impressed him.

He eagerly perused the lines addressed to him, which the fair writer had traced with a trembling hand. She related to her benefactor in the most affecting terms the almost sudden death of Celeste ; she poured out to him the deep grief with which her heart was filled, thanked him for all his goodness, and concluded by conjuring him with tears not to limit his benefits to what he had already done, but to endeavor to procure if possible the deliverance of her mother and eldest sister.

"Yes," said the young man to himself, as he placed the letter in his bosom, "my first care shall be to

obey her; it is thus that I will strive to render myself worthy of her affection."

He solicited and obtained leave of absence for a few days, and set out instantly for Le Mans.

Arrived there, his first visit was to the prison of the Oratory, where Scevola received him like a good client, from whom future favors might be expected.

"Well, citizen," said he, "I have given you satisfaction I hope; I fulfilled all your wishes. Did your linnets arrive without meeting with any disaster?"

"And those who were left behind?" demanded M. de Fromental without replying to the question of the gaoler.

"The young one is all right; but it is all over with the old lady: she was buried the day before yesterday."

And, as cry of surprise and grief escaped the young man's lips, he continued:

"Do not suppose that it was any fault of mine, citizen commissioner. I let her want for nothing, as you told me; but typhus is stronger even than gold: it is the fifteenth prisoner that it has carried off since the commencement of this decade."

M. de Fromental was in despair. "I shall never have the courage to announce these sad tidings to her myself," thought he.

He requested to see Rosalie for an instant. The young captive gave him the details of the illness and death of her mother; she informed him also that a

charitable lady of the town, Mme. Legris de Pomeraye, having heard of her misfortunes, had come to visit and console her, and was now taking active steps to procure her liberty.

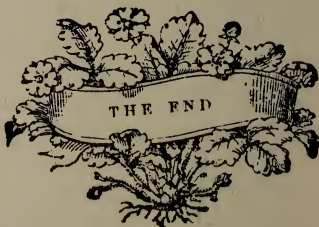
M. de Fromental went away from this interview a little comforted as to the fate of this poor young girl; and his mind then reverted to her sister Eulalie whom he had left with his kind old friend, and with whom it was necessary now to communicate at once. In his dreams for the future, he had indulged the hope of shortly offering his hand for the acceptance of Mlle. Eulalie, but he had hoped to do so armed with the consent of her mother, and now he had to break to her the sad intelligence of the death of that revered parent. Besides, he scrupled, in his exquisite sense of delicacy, to take advantage of his title of liberator to urge his acceptance as a suitor on a girl still so young, and deprived of the support and counsel of her parents. After serious reflection, he resolved first to solicit the consent of M. Boguais, who was then in exile in Germany, as well as those of the grandmother of Eulalie, who was still alive. He wrote at once to both, requesting permission to declare himself, and then returned to Nantes, where he awaited with impatience the answer to these two letters.

Three months after this, M. de Fromental married, with the consent of all her remaining relatives, Eulalie Boguais, whose admiration for the noble

character of her husband was equal to the fervor of his attachment.

Immediately after the marriage, which was celebrated at Chateaubriand, M. de Fromental conducted his young bride into Touraine, where Rosalie, freed from prison through the exertions of the courageous Mme. Legris de la Pommeraye, was soon enabled to rejoin her sister.

As for Mlle. Petronille Chevert, if any one desires to know what became of her, they may be informed that she was alive and as brisk as ever at the restoration, having so completely repudiated her republican tendencies that she really and truly believed she had always remained faithful to the cause of the Bourbons.



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
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